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WORLD COMMUNITY



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WORLD COMMUNITY

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To
MY MOTHER

PREFACE

A FRIEND remarked to me recently that he found himself feeling alternately that the Church was a completely hopeless organization and that it was the only hope of the world. That remark might serve as a text for this book. I have tried to be honest about the facts which justify the former part of the remark, while I believe the latter part so deeply that I can only hope the arguments offered may not be wholly unworthy of the greatness of the theme.

To many—it may even be to most—of our generation it may seem foolish and irrelevant to bring in the Christian Church when the subject under discussion is the problem of world community. But there are already signs that the tide has turned and that the meaning of the Church and its integral place in a genuinely historic Christianity are being appreciated anew.

Two brief explanations are perhaps necessary. It is lamentably true that the word "church" is used in a great many different senses. Too often it means the clergy: as in the aphorism of the Archbishop of York: "When people say to me 'Why doesn't the Church do something' I usually find

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that they mean 'Why don't the Bishops say something.'” I have used the word “Church” for that wide and actual fellowship of Christians, in some measure comprising and comprised in the divided communions, which more and more we all recognize to exist and bind us together. As Bishop Palmer has said, “the Great Church awakes.” When I have used the word “Churches” I have meant usually denominations, though sometimes it is used of congregations and in such cases the context makes it reasonably clear.

The second point is that my argument omits from its scope the special contentions of the Roman Catholic Church. I mention this only because Roman Catholic reviewers of another book were so kind as to express regret that I had there omitted consideration of the work of that Church. I have done so partly because I do not like to write of what I only know slightly, but much more because I feel that I must part company at so early a stage. I find it quite impossible to understand how it can be held by convinced and sensitive Christians that there is only one true Church of Christ in the world, in the sense that one visible communion can claim to be that One. It seems to me to be so plain that in fact the Church of Christ *is* divided. I believe in the Holy Catholic Church; I cannot hold that one organized communion alone represents it on earth; when I am told that devout Protestants may perhaps belong to the “soul of the Church” I gladly recognize that here is realism breaking through conventional belief. There are other and

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vital points at which I must dissent wholly from the Roman view, and I did not wish the book to be in that manner controversial. I will nevertheless confess that for the œcumenical quality of Rome I have a genuine admiration, though I do not believe that it is by the method of submission to an infallible authority that Christendom will recover its œcumenical life.

Some of the material of this book was delivered as lectures in America at Princeton Theological Seminary, and in England at the University of Cambridge, under the auspices of the Faculty of Theology.

I have to thank my friends Miss Underhill, Canon Barry, Canon McLeod Campbell, Dr. J. H. Oldham, the Rev. J. W. C. Dougall, and the Rev. Hugh Martin for reading the manuscript and helping me by suggestions, and my wife and my son James for compiling the index.

WILLIAM PATON.

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CHAPTER I

THE BREAK UP OF THE OLDER COMMUNITY

MR. J. M. KEYNES, at an early point in his *Economic Consequences of the Peace*,¹ gives expression to his sense of the unity, at least in the mechanism of life, that prevailed in the world on which, in August 1914, the last Great War broke in devastation. "The inhabitant of London could order by telephone, sipping his morning tea in bed, the various products of the whole earth, in such quantity as he might see fit, and reasonably expect their early delivery upon his door-step; he could at the same moment and by the same means adventure his wealth in the natural resources and new enterprises of any quarter of the world, and share, without exertion or even trouble, in their prospective fruits and advantages; or he could decide to couple the security of his fortunes with the good faith of the townspeople of any substantial municipality in any continent that fancy or information might recommend. He could secure forthwith, if he wished it, cheap and com-

¹ pp. 9-10.

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fortable means of transit to any country or climate without passport or other formality, could dispatch his servant to the neighbouring office of a bank for such supply of the precious metals as might seem convenient, and could then proceed abroad to foreign quarters, without knowledge of their religion, language, or customs, bearing coined wealth upon his person, and would consider himself greatly aggrieved and much surprised at the least interference. But, most important of all, he regarded this state of affairs as normal, certain and permanent, except in the direction of further improvement, and any deviation from it as aberrant, scandalous, and avoidable."

Many of these joys are now withheld from us. Yet it is worth noticing—and we might find worse places to begin our search for the principle of world community—that so far as human mastery of the technique of living is concerned much more than Mr. Keynes offers us out of his memories of an economic Eldorado is, or can be, true to-day. If there is to be found in most public comment on human affairs an undertone of sadness and disillusionment, it is not because we are afraid, as at an earlier date our fathers were, that the world is not going to be able to support and satisfy our appetites. It is not because the inexorable hardness of things rises up and gives denial to our generous passion for brotherhood. It is for the opposite reason. We are aware that the command of nature already attained by man is enough to enable him to abolish most of the woes that have afflicted human-

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ity since history began to be written. We are aware that such inventions as the wireless, the cinematograph and the aeroplane have made it possible for an actual intimacy of knowledge to grow up among the children of men, such as has been physically impossible for more than a tiny few during all the previous ages of human history. We know these things, and we also know that somehow or other we cannot rise to the occasion. Our defect is not primarily intellectual. True, the study of economics is difficult and high finance is a mystery, but we do not really in our secret hearts believe that all the mournful business of quotas and trade restrictions, burning food to keep the price up, the existence of at least a quarter of a million of "long-unemployed" in England and Wales, and the rest of it, is due to an inability on the part of good men to devise any better way. We know that there is something more deeply wrong with us than that. "The world has become a unity, and for this high destiny mankind is not yet fit."¹

On the technical side we are ready for world community, and the work of our best brains has brought it nearer to us. In fact we may go farther; we can say that the developed life of mankind is now such as to make a closer connection between the different human groups and families not merely possible but necessary. We are tied up with one another. But it is the tragedy of our modern world that we are forming ourselves into mutually exclu-

¹ Romain Rolland.

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sive and hostile groups, and that a considerable part of thinking mankind is either finding the spirit of community in passionate loyalty to a racial, national or class grouping, or is afflicted by a sense of bewilderment, *malaise* and loss of the sense of "belonging." It is "realistic," as the cant phrase has it, to treat the wider brotherhood of men as a mere and empty dream; the virile assertions of the glories that belong to blood and nation are at least made with the appearance of far greater conviction than accompanies nowadays the message of world unity. Yet, unless we are to regard all the possibilities that science has opened up to us as belonging to some other world than our own, it is the internationalists who are the realists, and it is the nationalists who want to "put the clock back," "fly in the face of facts," and do other highly unrealistic things.

Mr. Lionel Curtis in *Civitas Dei*¹ demands of historians that they should show us "how they think the past as a whole has produced the present." The present writer is no historian, but an attempt must be made, if only by repeating what are almost commonplaces, to suggest some of the causes that have wrought in the production of our present state. A graphic summing up of past and present is to be found at the beginning of one of the reports produced by the great meeting of the Churches held at Oxford last July. Describing mankind as "distraught and disunited," they go on to say, "Divisions and conflicts there have always been. But the

¹ Preface to Vols. II and III.

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foundations of the communal life in generally accepted systems of customs, social distinctions, moral and cultural values, religious beliefs have remained sufficiently firm to preserve the essential structure of the various communities in which men have lived their lives together. To-day, however, as probably only once or twice before in human history, the foundations themselves are shaken. Traditional pieties and loyalties and standards of conduct have lost their unquestioned authority; no new ones have taken their place. As a result, the community life of mankind has been thrown into confusion and disintegration. Though more marked in some sections of mankind than in others, these facts are in some measure universal. This social disunity is reflected in the life of the individual man and woman, whose personal destiny is largely bound up with his relation to the community. When society 'goes to pieces' the individual tends also to 'go to pieces,' in suffering, frustration, and a baffled sense of the futility and meaninglessness of his existence. In many countries vigorous attempts are being made to restore social unity by drastic control and regimentation, and by making national or class unity the supreme good, to take precedence of all else. These bear witness to the truth of what has just been said and to the primal need of human life as God has made it for community and fellowship."¹

¹ *The Churches Survey Their Task*, pp. 67-8.

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THE BREAK UP OF CHRISTENDOM

This is in the main written of our situation as it appears within the bounds of a single nation. But it is not less true of the wider field. Once there did exist something that could with justice and meaning be called Christendom. It is not necessary to be a medievalist to recognize that. Between the period when the formal Christianization of Europe was accomplished and the pregnant time of the Renaissance and the Reformation there did exist a community in Europe possessed by a certain unity, and that unity derived mainly, if not wholly, from the Christian religion. There was a commonly accepted philosophy. There was a Church which was accepted throughout the whole of Western and Central Europe. The world of learning was united in such a way that students could and did pass from one university to another with a freedom and a sense of belonging to a common world of Christian learning which hardly exist to-day. But what is more important still is that the European society of that time knew itself to be subject in all its parts to the Christian rule. That is not to say that the Christian rule was always obeyed; it would be absurd to make that pretence. But it is fair to say that the society of medieval Europe acknowledged that the truths of the Christian religion were the foundation upon which society was built, that by them states and princes were to be judged, that the application of the moral teaching of Christianity to the world of

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affairs, business and commerce, was a right and proper application, and that in short it would regard itself and expect others to regard it as a Christian society—Christendom. If, to take just one example, the Church laid down rules about usury, those rules might or might not be obeyed, but it would not occur to anyone to urge that it was no part of the Church's duty or concern to make such rules.

We know how and why that unified Christendom broke up. The Reformation meant, among other things, a new attitude towards the authority of the Church. Nations came into being, and the outline of modern national Europe appeared. National Churches replaced for a considerable part of the Christian world the one undivided Church. With the Renaissance came a tremendous intellectual movement, of which one fruit was the rebirth of natural science, and the application of the experimental spirit of science to all the departments of life. As the scientific method gave rise to invention and to industry, there came into being a different kind of world, a world of greatly increased populations, mainly urban, of huge productivity demanding outlet, and of economic movements and forces which because of their great dimensions and the vast powers unleashed through them, seemed to belong to a separate creation and not to be patient of the ancient controls.¹

¹ The idea, current in certain quarters, that this is a distinctively Protestant notion is dismissed by Prof. R. H. Tawney in his *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*. "The doctrine that religion and economic interests form two separate and co-ordinate

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As many writers have pointed out, this process was not merely, as things were, inevitable, but also partly good. What was really wrong with the older synthesis of life, rooted in the Christian revelation, was that in practice it meant that the parsons laid down the rules for the laymen. In a very simple society, with an authoritarian Church in effective occupation of the field, such a position can be sustained for a time. But in the far more complicated modern society ushered in by the industrial revolution, with the new belief in individual judgment and the decay of ecclesiastical authority, it was inevitable that the different parts of society should no longer be bound together as they were bound together in the older *régime* by the force of a common order. In the long run—and we are now beginning to see this happen—Christian men of affairs, acquainted as clergy cannot be with the detailed problems of industry and commerce, will work out for themselves the bearing of Christian truth upon these spheres of life.

But our purpose here is not to pursue that very interesting study, but only to point out the un-

kingdoms . . . was commonly accepted by the England of the nineteenth century. . . . Its victory was long in being won. The economic theories propounded by the Schoolmen; the fulminations by the left wing of the Reformers against usury, land grabbing and extortionate prices; the appeal of hard-hearted Tudor statesmen to traditional religious sanctions; the attempt of Calvin and his followers to establish an economic discipline more rigorous than that which they had overthrown—are bad evidence for practice but good evidence for thought. All rest on the assumption that the . . . whole fabric of society and the whole range of its activities stand by no absolute title, but must justify themselves at the bar of religion." (Preface to 1937 edition.)

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deniable fact of disintegration. The more complex world was not related to a single centre as was the simpler and older world; still less did it find its central beacon light in religion. It was easy for men to conceive that the world of economics lay apart from that of ethics, and that there were absolute laws that governed that world in such wise that it was even wrong to seek to bring to bear upon economic issues the testing of moral and religious principle. It was the same with the other departments of life. Each was thought of as a kingdom in its own right, ruled by its own laws. Science was one such kingdom. Education might almost be said to have become another. And religion itself—here we touch the centre of the evil—had become one among the interests and departments of life.

“ Things have come to a pretty pass,” Lord Melbourne is said to have remarked, “ when religion interferes with a man’s private life.” This is possibly an extreme example of the kind of disintegration to which we have referred. But it is not uncommon even to-day to find grave rebukes addressed in great newspapers to spokesmen of the Church who seek to relate the Church’s life and witness to the clamant affairs of the day. For religion, and most of all the Christian religion, to accept the position that its place in the life of men is that of a single specialized interest, is to commit suicide. If secularism is properly the name of that kind of society, typical of Western Europe and America in the later nineteenth century, in which

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there is no truly binding and uniting principle that holds society together and each part of man's life is controlled by its own laws, because there is no overmastering truth to which all is referred, then the most secular thing in a secularized world is the religion that accepts that position, and retires upon the duty of offering a cultus and a private consolation to such as desire it.

Purposely this short attempt at diagnosis has been offered in terms largely applicable to British life, because in some ways, as a distinguished Continental scholar remarked to the writer, "England is still the least secularized country in Europe." But it is manifest that where there has been a weakening of the ancient foundations and unities the way is open to a widespread chaos, if any great and sudden strain is laid upon the life of the community. That, in fact, is what has happened in such countries as Germany, and it is wholly essential that Britain, the more because German methods of reintegration contain so much that is utterly distasteful to our notions of right, should realize how greatly the need for that reintegration must have been felt by Germans who loved Germany. We have now passed out of the age of which secularism, in the sense in which we have used the term—a society devoid of any supreme governing principle of right and therefore progressively disintegrating—is the typical danger. To-day we see before our eyes the dramatic rise of what are in a legitimate and true sense new religions. There is accepted as the beacon light of human community an Absolute. This Abso-

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lute may be Race and Blood, or it may be Nation, or it may be Class. The attitude taken towards it is religious, in two senses. The authority that is claimed is inherent. The disciples of the absolute race-state do not seek to commend their god by reference to some other and accepted principle. They claim to speak with inherent authority—and that is the way that true religion speaks. Further, they claim the whole man, as all true religion does.

It is not necessary here to do again what has been so often done, and to depict the working of the totalitarian State, whether in its fascist or national-socialist or its communist form. Here we need only to fix our gaze upon one thing. What is the quality and nature of the community-feeling which these forms of government engender? On the one hand we find—and it is mere purblindness to deny it—an enthusiasm, a sense of brotherhood, a mutual commitment to those who are fellows in the same State which are admirable. It is not only crypto-fascists who are impressed by the spirit of the young men in Germany, nor is it only communist pamphleteers who admire the enthusiasm of young Russians for the social order to which, as they think, they owe so much. There has been in countless cases the rehabilitation of a spiritless society, and a sense of meaning and direction infused into a disintegrated and meaningless life.

But the other side of it is what we also know and deplore, the apparent necessity whereby these good things are linked inexorably with tyranny and oppression, with racial exclusiveness, with a veritable

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intoxication of the national consciousness. Within the State there is no true freedom, because the nation-state is absolute and there is nothing in heaven or earth that can judge it. The joy of service in a reborn society may hide from many of the younger generation what is really happening to them, but the truth is that the right and place of the individual are wholly merged in the State. As for other countries, there is a hearty contempt for such *démodé* notions as international law and an insistence that in all things the nation-state is to be judge of its own needs and actions. The conception of "humanity" vanishes as completely as that of "Christendom."

Those who live in the democratic countries are accustomed to look with some sense of superiority at these "totalitarian" States. Nor are they wrong in believing that in their own societies they have preserved something of infinite worth that the others have thrown to the wolves. But before they do so, let them reflect on themselves. If the recoil from acute disintegration, as in Germany, Italy and Russia, has produced the idolatry of the nation-state, what have the democratic countries to offer? Sometimes the ruins only of an exaggerated individualism, a notion of human autonomy that owed nothing at all to the Christian truth of the love of God for man, but exalted man, in the old Greek philosopher's word, to be "the measure of all things." Or a political equality according ill with great economic inequality, so that men who are economically at the disposal of others, or of imper-

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sonal combines, know themselves to be mocked by the insistence that they are politically sovereign.

"I sometimes think," said one observer, "that a great many of the younger people to-day *have no sense that they belong to anything.*" Is it too facile a generalization to say that with the break-up of the older Christendom there has come into being either a failure to achieve any sense of community and of the purpose and meaning of the life of men together, or a frenzied effort to put a meaning into life by exalting into the very place of the Most High God some part of man—his blood and race, or his nation, or the inter-play of the forces that make up his economic life? Either to belong nowhere, or to be merged in the totality of that to which we belong—is that the practical choice to which we are reduced?

DISINTEGRATION IN THE EAST

So far we have thought only of the West, but the vast populations of Asia and Africa are not untouched by the same processes of disintegration and reintegration. The present age is characteristically the age of the West, for it is the processes and influences that have had their origin in the West that have mainly reshaped the societies of the East and of Africa. The Indian poet and seer, Rabindranath Tagore, once remarked to a little group of Englishmen in London, "You people of the West must take the lead and do the best that you can in this time of the world's history, for *this age is your*

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age." Again, we can attempt no more than a cursory survey of a huge field crammed with all the problems that arise when ancient civilizations, based in the main upon religious sanctions, are exposed to the corroding acids of modern Western industrialism and other forces.

ISLAM

Islam has always, and with justice, boasted that it offered a synthesis of life. It knew nothing, as an Indian Muslim scholar¹ said at the time of the struggle over the Turkish Caliphate, of the "devitalizing distinction between sacred and secular." For it, in its classical thinking, there has been one entity, the Church State. The law that governed the individual and the community alike was a religious law, contained in or deduced from the holy writings of the Koran. While special and subordinate arrangements were made for the non-Muslim minorities in countries to which the Muslim sway had been extended, the true and typical Muslim State was one in which Church and civil community were precisely co-terminous, and the whole of the fabric of corporate life found its principles of guidance in revealed religion, the utterances of Allah to his prophet, Muhammad. It was, as Lord Olivier has called it, a fine synthesis.

Nothing is plainer to the observer in the Near East to-day than the clash between the underlying principle of this unified Muslim society and the

¹ The late Mohamed Ali.

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totally different ideas that have come in from Europe and America. Turkey has led the way in the direction of wholesale iconoclasm. Not only have veil, fez, Arabic script and Koranic education gone, but the sacred law has given way to the Swiss Civil code, the caliphate has been abolished (and with it one of the great binding forces of the Muslim world), and the clause of the Constitution, which laid it down that the religion of the Turkish state was Islam, has been removed. The unifying principle of the new Turkey, under that vigorous and remarkable man, Kemal Atatürk, is not Islam but Turkish racialism.

Not far behind, and moving steadily along the same tracks as the Turks, come the ruler and people of Iran, as we now call Persia. Here again we find the abolition of the outward insignia of the old religion-based order of life, and a keen racial nationalism taking its place. It is said by people with an unquestioned right to speak, that among educated Iranians it is now almost difficult to find any who take Islam seriously. It is significant that in Iran there is a more vigorous, and at the same time more genuinely national-spirited, Christian Church than in any other Islamic land of the Near East.

In Baghdad, capital of Iraq, the same processes can be seen at work. Some years ago an old scholar, head of a training college for teachers, expressed to us with profound regret the total lack of belief in Islam which he found in every one of his students. But they were Iraqi in sentiment, and the appearance of religious conviction some-

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times continues when the reality is a keen sense of national community, of which a prevailing and historic religion remains a convenient symbol. It may, for instance, be gravely doubted whether the massacre of the Assyrians—that tragic nation deserted by those who had profited by its service—was not much more due to Iraqi nationalism, impatient of the existence in its midst of a stubbornly alien people, than to a fanatical Muslim hostility to Christianity.

In Egypt, where the officially Islamic character of the national life is still unimpaired, and the constitution still states that "Islam is the religion of Egypt," it is possible nevertheless to discern the same forces at work. The mob is orthodox—the orthodoxy of the Muslim mob has always been an important political fact in Muslim countries—but the sections of the people that have come under the influence of modern education, French, English and American, are held to Islam by links of culture and national tradition, not by religious conviction. The leaders of the nation very badly want to be the standard-bearers of the Islamic culture, now that Turkey has chosen the secular way, but they want also to be good Europeans and to convince the nations of Europe that the principles of justice and of individual liberty which (at least until the recent past) have been associated with Europe, are being treasured no less in Egypt.

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CLASH OF IDEAS IN INDIA

India exhibits in the persons of her two outstanding modern leaders the clash of forces making both for disintegration and for reintegration. Mr. Gandhi, whose unchallenged pre-eminence in Indian affairs the events of the last twelve months have proved even to the most sceptical observer, quite clearly wants a different sort of India from that desired by the leader of the Left party of the Congress, Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru. To Mr. Gandhi the way forward is the way back—back from modern industrialism with its slums, its characterless mass civilization, and its irreligion, to the older kind of India, where the village was a microcosm of the whole people, the different groups did each its caste task, and the spirit of Hinduism, strong in its reverence for life and its love of poverty, ruled throughout the fabric of national life. But untouchability must be removed. To Mr. Nehru, on the contrary, both a village India revived by the spinning-wheel and the spirit of Hinduism itself seem irrelevant to the needs of the country, as he perceives them. He loves and admires Mr. Gandhi, but he wants to have big collective farms and to stud the country with great factories, so that the level of life of the people may be effectively raised. The one conception is fundamentally religious in its principle, the other draws its inspiration from Western sources and especially from Soviet Russia.

It is a struggle fraught with very great conse-

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quences for India. Not less than the older Islam, Hinduism has been not only a religion in the narrow sense but a social system. It is necessary only to recall the word "caste" to be reminded of that. Caste was not only a religious idea, it was a complete system of society whose binding force lay in the fact that it was related to the doctrine of *karma* and the transmigration of souls. Looked at with a little idealization, perhaps, it might be described as a society in which each person, set in his place by the operation of the moral law through reincarnation, had a *dharma* or religious duty to perform, so that the whole of society was a kind of mosaic in which each piece had an appointed place.

But industrialism, which most Indians think necessary if the level of life of an increasing population is to be raised or even maintained, means the dissolution of most of the old caste ties and rules. Education, combined with the pressure of the new ideas coming from the West, makes for a large class of keen young men and women who have in effect ceased to believe in religion at all. Young Muslims and young Brahmins are alike in this. For them the source of social renewal is in many cases not the Koran or the Bhagavad-Gita¹ but *Das Kapital*.

CHINA IN FERMENT

If we turn to China we can see something of the same processes at work. No man can say what will be the state of China, or the forces dominant

¹ The most popular of the Hindu Scriptures.

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within her, after the cataclysm of war, ruthless, unprovoked and heroically withstood, has passed over her. Already she has had a quarter of a century in which she has experienced more than one revolution. The old civilization, based on a federation of clans and villages, with a central government conspicuous mainly by its inaction, lasted down the centuries because of the effective power of the Confucian morality. It was followed by a collapse both material and political. "Few people in England," says Sir Arthur Salter,¹ "realize how calamitous was the state of the country when the Kuomintang Government came into power. Not only had China been wasted by fifteen years of civil war, but the age-old political structure had collapsed, and had to be built anew, for the most part on a new pattern." The National Government, led by General Chiang Kai-shek from Nanking, faced difficulties such as those presented by Germany after the Thirty Years War, or China after the Tartar invasions, and most outside observers agree in paying tribute to the vigour and ability of its labours. But the work of education, rural reconstruction, road-building and all the rest has ceased under the stress of invasion. Close students tell us that the influences that contend for the control of China's life in the future are four. First, there is Japan; Japanese control would mean the continuance of the main stream of Chinese village life—nothing can stop that—but a denial to Chinese of any opportunity to express

¹ *In China: Body and Soul*, pp. 145-6.

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their national genius in terms of self-government, except through puppet rulers, subservient to Japanese desires. Second, there is Communism. China has shown every sign hitherto of disliking and distrusting all foreign influences that seek to control China; she might develop her own type of communistic life, but her record suggests that to an alien and Leninist Communism she would turn a deaf ear. Third, there is Chinese Fascism. It is not widely known in the West that there are some 20,000 men in China who have been trained in military academies, staffed almost entirely by German and Italian officers. To this large and influential group the way for China to raise herself, in a world which despises weakness, is to copy the methods so far found successful by the German and Italian dictators. Fourth, there is the group of liberals or democrats. They accept the principles of Sun Yat-sen, and though the Kuomintang is not a democratic party, they have in the main expressed themselves through it. Perhaps the New Life Movement of General Chiang most nearly represents what they stand for at their best. If they should come out on top at the end of this phase of the Far Eastern struggle for China's body and soul, the result will be the spreading and encouragement of liberal institutions, and probably a welcome for Christian activity.

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JAPAN AND THE DIVINE STATE

But Japan is not only the disturber of China, she is herself disturbed. On the one hand she is an ancient empire with continuous institutional life; above all, with an Imperial House going back to the dawn of Japanese history. On the other, she is the most highly industrialized country in the whole of the East, with a concentration of capital in very few hands. To such a country it is certain that the severest social strains must come, and the great wave of "left" sentiment that swept over the country during the period before the Manchurian invasion was in no way difficult to account for. It may be that this is the reason—or one of the reasons—for the intensification of the Emperor cult. Emperor-worship, carried on in specially designated state shrines, is being pressed with increasing vigour on the schools and colleges throughout the Japanese Empire, and especially in the outlying parts in which it may be assumed that the sense of identity with the Japanese tradition is weakest. How that worship incarnates and at the same time increases the spirit of national community, as a thing absolute and unsurpassable, may be well seen in the following remarks made by a priest of a State shrine in Tokyo. "The deities of the shrines are fundamentally related to the establishment of the nation, and to honour and worship them is to unite oneself with the Empire. . . . Because faith in Buddha or Jesus may separate one from his duty as a subject of the State, such faith can never be a manifesta-

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tion of the nation. . . . The centre of the shrine activities is the worship of the gods and the surrender of everything in the attainment of union with them. . . . The individual existence gains inner serenity and life is given meaning. What is here meant by imparting meaning to life is not to be judged by the standard of personal gain, but rather it means participation as subjects in the support of Imperial rule. It means to become of one body with our ancestors, to make the traditional spirit of our ancestors our spirit. . . . It means a fervent pushing on to spread the Imperial rule and to extend the Imperial glory. The shrines are the practical culture-centres where men are deified and made gods, and where the Emperor is ever more and more strengthened in his position as Emperor."¹

That such a cult should have behind it the whole force of the military caste, is very easily intelligible. An expanding empire may well need some such doctrine to underpin it. But a nation that finds the secret of community in such a doctrine is both shut off in sympathy from all the rest of mankind and is itself condemned to the loss of freedom, because there is no criterion of judgment that can be brought to bear upon the State.

AFRICA AND THE NEW WORLD

In these ancient lands of the East there is to be seen the clash of modern Western ideas with age-

¹ Quoted by D. C. Holtom in *International Review of Missions*, April, 1938, pp. 159-60.

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long civilizations and written cultures. But there is one great tract of the earth, namely Africa, in which the inrush of the new forces of the West has been at least as great as anywhere in the world, but there has been no ancient culture to withstand it, only the power of tribal society with its customary law. It is difficult to convey, without the use of language which must seem exaggerated, the extent and depth of the changes which have been brought to pass in African life, in all parts of the continent, by European trade and commerce, government, education and economic development. No more graphic instance is to be found than that of the tribesmen who go for hundreds of miles from their tribal homes to the copper-mines of Northern Rhodesia, there to be plunged at one stroke into the modern industrial economy. But they have hardly even been individuals before; they were a part of the tribe, and their morality and their own consciousness were tribal. That this vast change should go on is probably quite inevitable; it can be mitigated by the kind of studies that anthropologists make, and the transition can be made less sudden and more fruitful. But something must take the place of the old and naïve tribalism. There are three competitors—Islam, Communism and Christianity. Islam has the attraction that it offers a racial equality within its own brotherhood. Communism offers the same attraction to urbanized Africans as it does to the under-privileged all over the world. Christianity? In the next chapter we shall consider what is its fundamental claim to

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be heard. But so far as Africa is concerned it must be said that its greatest single handicap is the fact that it is professed by white men who by racial exclusiveness and economic domination deny the Word.

CHAPTER II

WHAT THE CHURCH MEANS

It is not altogether easy for a churchman who is honest—in the sense in which honesty excludes an idealistic view of oneself and the institutions to which one belongs—to make the kind of statements and advance the sort of claims which this chapter must contain. Churches are accused of many things, but lack of self-criticism cannot fairly be included among them. Anyone who will read through, for instance, the reports of the Oxford conference on Church, Community and State will find so many expressions of the failure of the Churches to live up to the greatness of the mission of the Church that he may almost come to suspect a certain liturgical quality about them.¹ We have been told so often that we must not ascribe to the Churches, as they are, the majestic attributes of the Church that is the Body of Christ, that we are perhaps unwilling to come out into the arena with a plain statement of what it is that, as all Christians

¹ The distinguished chairman of one section, having been reproved in private for the lack of explicit expression, in his report, of a sense of the Church's own need to confess failure, came down to breakfast the next day triumphantly asserting that there was now "penitence in every paragraph."

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in some sense believe, God offers in the Church to the world of men. Yet it is not difficult to show not only that the Church is relevant to our need, but that the Church contains in its message and as part of the constitutive reality of its life precisely what the world needs, and shows by its frantic efforts after the spirit of community that it knows it needs.

Let us, then, for a space fix our attention upon what in its essence the Church is. Later it will be necessary to relate this to the actual conditions of the life of the Churches, but it is not really profitable to do this until we know what in principle the Church is, and what are the real claims that must be made in its name. (Of course, if one believed that the Churches, as they now exist, were apostate and that the authentic life and word were no more to be found within them, it would be useless to go further, for then one would be discussing a mere empty idea. But it is not in that spirit that this book is being written; indeed, the case that can be made for the actual Churches as they now stand in the world is far more convincing than many within them realize.)

Out of the confused mass of colours, which is all that our attempted picture in the preceding chapter presents, some things stand out with sufficient clearness. All over the world—in East and West alike—there is a chaos and disintegration, of which the root cause is the fading out of an Absolute to which the parts of life could be referred and from which they drew their meaning. In so far as

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the gap was filled, in the West at least, by that philosophy called variously liberalism, humanism or individualism—that is, by a confidence in the goodness, wisdom and power of man to put his house in order and to progress in an ever-increasing realization of the hidden treasures of life—it must be recognized that the period of satisfied illusion was short, and that a very different temper soon manifested itself. What we now see, again all over the world, is the raising up of other Absolutes, in order that around them the bewildered life of man may find order and meaning. We might say without exaggeration that the history of our own human society shows that *the key to community lies in the recognition of something that transcends human community.*

THE CALL OF GOD

At this point it is possible to hear a voice speaking with unanimity and passion from within the Christian Church. It is in essence what Augustine meant when he said, "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it rest in Thee." To say this is not to say merely that the Church decides, of its own free volition, to honour God and to put Him first. It is to begin with an act, not of man, but of God. There is no understanding of the essential nature of the Church unless we recognize this truth at the outset. It has been said that the birthday of the Christian Church was when God called Abraham, and in view of the fact

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that the prophetic religion of the Hebrews has always been held by Christians to be a part of the Christian revelation, the claim may seem more than just an ecclesiastical *bon mot*. The choosing of a people by the Most High, who should, through unimaginable suffering and the discipline that suffering brings, be the bearers of the Divine word and the special instrument of His purpose—this, of a certainty, lies behind the religion of the New Testament as behind that of the Old. If it be held, further, that with the turning away from the truth on the part of the chosen the promises of God were continued to the world through the lonely figure of the Son of Man, then the divine initiative in the formation of the Church is very plain to see. The Church claimed to be the Israel of God, not because the Christians had chosen God, but because God had chosen them. To be a Christian, in the beginning and all down the ages, has been to know oneself a member of a fellowship, a society, which one did not join with others to form, but into which one has been brought by the love of God.

The little communities of Christians, mostly of the humblest origin (though there were among them not few who had much to give up for Christ's sake), went about their task of preaching Christ to the world with the certainty that they were fulfilling not their will but His. The ancient promises were fresh and strong in them. They were about their Father's business. He had made and He would bear; they had not chosen but were chosen; their warfare was not at their own charges. It does not matter about

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being an outcast, or being chased by your racial kinsmen from town to town as St. Paul was, or facing the organized persecution of the government of the whole civilized world, as crowds of them did, if only you know that against all appearances you are on the side of the Eternal. Biblical scholars may discuss the nature of this certainty and see it as conditioned by the conviction that the end was very near; the point is that even though the Christians presented to themselves their *sureness* of the ultimate end in terms of its *nearness*, they did conceive of the Christian enterprise of witness in the world as a part of the Divine purpose and owing its very life to it.

It follows from this that there is no activity of the Church which is quite so fundamental to its being as worship. It may be urged, and we would not contest it, that if there is no witness to Christ there is no Christianity, and that in that sense it is witness that is fundamental. But the life of the Christian society begins in the common adoration of God and ends with the same adoration. It is God who has called it into being; it is His purpose that is being carried out in the Church, be its failings never so great; the passion and death of Jesus that were for all mankind, and the power of His rising again, into which all may enter by the common and indwelling Spirit—all these things are the theme of a continual pæan of wondering adoration and gratitude.

Christianity, too, is a historical religion, and that means that for it the revelation of God in Jesus

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Christ is absolute. True, there is in it far more to be discovered than Christians of any one time have found; true again, they will find much of God in the world as they look at it through the eyes of Christ and trace the preparation for Him. But it is not possible to adore God in Christ and to put alongside of that revelation other revelations that shall condition and limit it. The same thing is true in the realm of morals. The moral history of the Churches is not a wholly admirable record—into that others have gone so fully that it need not be dealt with here. To put the case at its mildest, there has been slowness in recognizing the implications of following the Master, in terms of the concrete choices that had to be made at given times. Yet when the Church has made up its mind that a certain line of conduct is not compatible with the following of Jesus, and is contrary to the law of God, it has stuck to its guns. It has always believed that it had to obey God, if only it knew what God did demand. It may have been slow to see, or in love with the conventions of the world, but it always has believed that there are things right and things wrong, independent of the social custom or of the ordinances of the secular government. There have been many times in Christian history when the choice between obeying God and obeying man has been a real choice; it can hardly in fairness be denied that the Church has spoken within the total life of men for the absolute claim of God, come what may.

It is worth remembering that this putting God

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first is reflected and brought to the consciousness of myriads of people all over the world every day and every hour in the practice of corporate worship. To pray to God, no matter whether it is rather conventionally done; to have the Word read to the people—such simple and universal practices are wholly devoid of meaning unless they mean that there is One other than man, to whom all human hearts must go out in worship, One who has not withheld Himself in darkness and cloud, but has entered into fellowship with man by the utterance of His word.

FORGIVENESS

If the first great message of the Church to the world is contained in the fact that it puts God first, both in its recognition of His activity as prior to that of man, and also in its adoration of His gracious will, the second has to do with Forgiveness.

It is possible to wonder how many of us who call ourselves Christians realize the extraordinary paradox of that central service of worship in which most Christians join. The Eucharist, the Supper of the Lord, is a continual remembering within the life of the Church of—what? Of the fact that Jesus of Nazareth, “on the night on which He was betrayed,” gave to His disciples the symbols of his own death. There is perhaps nothing in human history that compares with that continuous remembrance. From our own times, whether we celebrate the Lord’s self-giving with the richness of

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ancient ritual or in the barest simplicity, there goes back a sort of corporate memory,¹ right back, generation before generation, to those who had themselves been with the Lord in the upper room, had watched Judas steal out into the night, had taken from the hands of their Master the broken bread whereby He prefigured the breaking of His own body, and the poured-out wine whereby He made them partakers in the blood He was about to shed for them. He was saying to them, though we may wonder how far they could have understood Him, that in every human sense the cause was lost. Perhaps some of them had hoped for political and revolutionary leadership in Him—we do not really know; we do know that judged by all such standards He had failed. On the morrow He was put to death by the method employed on turbulent slaves and malefactors; and it was not a heroic death at the hands of those acknowledged by the standards of their own time to be bad men, but exactly and precisely a judicial condemnation by what was both most stable and most righteous. Roman government and Jewish religion joined in the act. And we, nineteen centuries after, and all the uncounted company of Christians in all the intervening ages, have seen the very heart of our faith set forth in a scene like that.

One would like to think that it is in this wholly paradoxical view of things that the unpopularity of the Church—where it is unpopular—consists. Of course such a belief and teaching was a

¹ I owe this thought to a speech of Professor C. H. Dodd.

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“scandal” and a foolishness. How could it be that in such events, followed by the story of a resurrection from the grave, the mind and purpose of God to man could be set forth? How is it that we ourselves, with our keen sense of the dignity of British institutions and our strong pride of race, find it possible to relate our national traditions, in moments of great national emotion, to this story of Calvary and this farewell meal of the Galilean peasant leader? Are not those more logical who say that for all who wish to stand by the greatness of their country and race and to hand on the inspiration of majestic history, this Christian tradition is nothing but dangerous weakness, linked with the ideas of those unaccountable people, the Jews?

Let us, at any rate, face this central paradox of forgiveness. For that is the foundation on which the Christian Church is built. The Church is not only a society believing that God called it into being and seeking to put Him first in its life and thought; it is specifically a society based upon the recognition that in the Cross of Jesus Christ the very life of God breaks forth on the world. History, as Tillich says, has a centre. It is not merely that what happened in that little room and on the hill outside has had manifold effects among people ever since; that is true, but it is true also in some measure of the death of Socrates. No, this fact is in the Christian view the centre of history because from this centre history derives its meaning. A new age had dawned. The writers of the New Testament “are clear that history is henceforth qualita-

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tively different from what it was before Christ's coming."¹ The Church is the witness in the world to the fact that a new start has been made.

Forgiveness, looked at deeply and sincerely, is a tremendous thing. It has nothing in the world to do with leniency, natural kindness and easy-goingness, still less with that temper of mind which allows us to slap one another on the back and assure ourselves, quite falsely, that it will be all the same in a hundred years. It rests upon this mysterious fact of which Calvary is the historic centre and every glad receiving of the broken bread the recognition, that God, the Holy One, enters into the life of sinners and is numbered with them. In the meeting of that perfect goodness with that perfect hate there is contained the whole terrible truth about the sinfulness of man. No one of us can ever afford to forget that it was the righteousness of men that slew Jesus, as well as their sinfulness. In that drama we all find our condemnation. But we find something beyond that. There shines out the certainty of the divine forgiveness, for He who came among men from the bosom of the Father, who spoke to them out of the unshared consciousness of the beloved Son, He and none other, bearing in His own body the penalty of human sin, speaks to us words of forgiveness. We confront what we can never wholly understand, though we can live in the knowledge of it, the bearing of the sins of men upon the heart of God.

¹ C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Development*, p. 217.

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Now this is something wholly alien from the natural thinking of mankind. There are hints and glimpses of gracious and redeeming actions by the gods in many of the world's religious traditions, but never does the human imagination rise of itself to the height of this idea. That one who was the Son of God should not only adventure Himself in compassion for men, but enter so wholly into the complex of human sinfulness as to be condemned to die as a felon, is still, as it was in the beginning, News. The preaching went on to say that God raised Him up, and there broke upon the human imagination fresh ideas of what is meant by the Divine omnipotence. But the Resurrection fulfilled and completed what was done on the Cross, it did not annul it. The Risen Lord is still a crucified One. The joy of the first Easter was not the joy of those who wake from a nightmare and thank God that after all it wasn't true and it didn't happen. It did happen, and because it happened it was not possible that death should be the end.

Here, then, is the characteristic note of the Christian Church. It believes that these events, so inconspicuous to the contemporary secular historian, are in fact the centre of history. It believes that here it touches the reality of the Divine nature. It believes that here it knows both the abyss that is in man and the glorious hope of what God can do with him. For itself, the principal element in its own ethic must always be gladness that God has so dealt with men, and the sense of debtorship which rejoices in every service and sacrifice, for it

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knows that no effort can repay what has been done.

One can hardly say anything more important about the Church than that *it is meant to be a place where forgiveness is known*. What might it not mean to our troubled world, held in the bonds of its own fear, finding its own righteousness an obstacle to fellowship, if there could be brought to it the life-giving knowledge of forgiveness, of the new start that can be made? Perhaps the chief reason why this does not happen is that the Churches have so often made it appear that they and their members stood on one side of the line that divided the forgiver from the forgiven, and the needy world upon the other.¹ Have we even begun to understand the meaning of Christ's life and death if we have not seen that none can take the message of forgiveness unless he is forgiven, and that to be numbered with the transgressors must be right for men, because it was—so the Gospel tells us—right for God?

THE TRUTH ABOUT MAN

We now come immediately to the third main element in the Church's message to our world. It is an insight into the true nature and worth of man. The penetrating truth of that insight can be seen very clearly by us modern men if we contemplate the startling manner in which we have embraced one and then another side of the truth,

¹ This thought is developed with much power and beauty in J. W. Stevenson's book *The Incredible Church*.

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always blindly, proudly and partially, and always failed to understand the whole. We are now passing out of a fashion in which the inherent worth of man was greatly stressed. Too many Christians have been guilty of identifying the autonomy of the individual with the liberty of the Christian man. To-day we see nations turning from the notion of individual liberty, worth and sacredness to new religions of which, as we have seen, it is a common characteristic that they bury the individual in the adulation demanded by the State.

The Christian religion says some simple and startling things about us men and women. It tells us, first, that God made us, and that He made us in His image. It could not well start us off higher than that. It goes on to say that that image of God in us is corrupted, and that we are sinful people. By this is not meant that we do wrong things from time to time, owing to regrettable misconceptions on our own part, but that we are caught up in a mass of corruption, that there is a twist in us, that we find it easy to go wrong, that there is a war in our members, as St. Paul puts it, between our knowledge of what we ought to do and our bent away from it to what is vile. There is, therefore, in the Gospel a total absence of optimism in the view it takes of man. But it goes on to say, as we have seen, that God in Christ does for men what they cannot do for themselves. He treats them as His sons though they have turned away from Him. He breaks through the weary chains of legalistic morals. He says to us that the grim, sad law of

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cause and effect is not His last word, and in uttering the word of forgiveness He also makes available for us the renewing spirit that recreates us from within.

A true Christianity can have no part or lot in the merely optimistic view of human nature. It knows it to be disastrous illusion, and that nothing but blasted hopes and bitter disappointments ever come from it. But we sometimes forget that the Gospel asserts a doctrine of the worth of man from a wholly different standpoint and with far greater power. In brief, it says that man is one to whom God speaks, that he is one for whom the Son of God was content to die, and that to treat him as a cog in a machine, or as a cross-section of a racial stream, is to do dishonour to God.

Christianity is full of paradoxes, but this is not the least striking. We find the true value of man by deserting the human standpoint. What man can assert for himself turns out to be but a poor thing; what God in His mercy declares man to be is a very great thing. It follows from this that there must always be deep down in the Christian Church a spirit that speaks against all undervaluing of man and doing him despite, whether in the name of the State, or of economic necessity, or of racial idealism. This is not, alas, to say that the Church has had no part in these blasphemies, and that it has not frequently condoned them. Still, there has always been the recalling voice. It is not possible to worship God in Christ—acknowledging not a vague idealism but a Gospel rooted in a historic act of

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the Divine mercy—without coming into a keener consciousness of the worth of men for whom Christ died. That is where St. Paul gets his insight into racial brotherhood. Men are chiefly, for him, not Jew or Greek, learned or barbarian, they are his brethren for whom Christ died. We touch here the deep cause of the fact that the Church is now widely understood to be the chief bulwark of human freedom in some places where that freedom is most gravely threatened.

THE MEANING OF COMMUNITY

From this recognition of the worth of man we pass to another element in the Church's message, closely connected with the last. It is the doctrine of society that is contained in it. It will be apparent from what has been said above that in the Christian religion the fellowship of Christians, the "household of God" as it is called in the Epistle to the Ephesians, is central. If true society is the relationship between persons, there should be no human society comparable with that which is rooted in the loving act of God, calling to man, making him a person by His call, and giving Himself in love for him. This is the reason for the high place given in all Christian writing to Love. Love among men reflects and has its origin in the love of God. "Every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God." To be a Christian means to be reborn into a new order of existence in which reign love and the freedom that only love

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creates. "The Church is the realization of true community. Its essential nature is fellowship between persons. It can be the manifestation of the true meaning of community because its life is rooted in the love of God. It is only the love of God which can deliver us from our self-centred isolation and set us free to love our fellow-men. The more we struggle to overcome our egocentricity the more egocentric we become. Only a love that comes to us from without and gives our lives a new centre in the One who loves us can break the fetters of our self-love. The Church is thus the sphere of free relations of mutual love and trust between persons, and is meant to be the witness of the world of the true relations of men with one another."¹

The problem of the relation between the Church as a fellowship and the multitudinous other societies in which men must take their place in the course of daily living is a very complex and difficult one, and though it is not the function of this book to offer a solution, it will have to come into our discussion. For the moment all that is necessary is to insist on the fact that the Church is a fellowship of persons, that the full meaning and sacredness of this personal relation goes back to the relation of God Himself with us men and women whom He calls and treats as persons, and that therefore membership in the Christian society is vital to the Christian profession and is a necessary

¹ J. H. Oldham in *The Church and Its Function in Society*, p. 160.

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part of the total gift which by the grace of God Christians have to offer to the world.

“Whose service is perfect freedom.” That phrase from the old collect sums up in a word the essential Christian insight into the matter of community. We tend to oscillate between a wrong individualism and a mass loyalty which makes nothing of the individual. The truth is that the individual finds himself in society, and that the true society is one in which the individual is enabled to realize himself. This is really a common-place of moral philosophy, and is not presented as a new insight of the Christian religion. But the rooting of both these aspects of the one truth back into the Divine and the safeguarding of both the individual person and the society of persons by the fact of the divine love, the supreme Ground of all true community—this is not a matter of moral philosophy, but of revelation.

Within human society, multiform and exacting as it is, the Church has the duty to stand as an example of the true spirit of community, and to interpret that spirit in relation to the different societies and communities of which the whole human society is made up.

A UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP

So we come to the fifth note of the Church of which mention must be made here. The Church is by its very nature universal. It may be that we are coming to recognize the truth of this in our

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own day just because the unity of mankind is being disrupted by the new and partial loyalties. What do we mean when we speak of the Church as universal? Not only that is widely distributed: so are many other institutions. The essential fact is that the act of God in Christ by which the Church's life is constituted has no meaning at all unless it applies and relates to all men equally and without exception. We have declared that it is the love of God as made known to us in Christ, the forgiveness of sins and the releasing of renewing and redeeming power, that make the Church. To say this is to say that the unity which is characteristic of its true life must always be greater than the differences that separate mankind. The Church does not deny that a Jew and an "Aryan" are different in certain respects, any more than it denies that a man and a woman are different in certain respects. There is reality in racial and national difference, and there is reality, more than we have been willing often to recognize, in economic difference and its results. The universal Church is not another name for cosmopolitanism, nor for the evasion of all the real problems of mankind. But the Church says to a man, "Yes, you are black, or you are a proletarian, or you are a citizen of a great empire; but there is something about you that is more important and that goes deeper than any of these things, real and important as they are. You are a child of God, and Jesus Christ died for you."

We shall have occasion to discuss later the prac-

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tical implications of this faith. It is perhaps as truly the source of the enmity in which the Church is held in certain quarters as any other single characteristic of the Church. It is at the same time (for all great difficulties turn out to be also great opportunities) the aspect of the Church's life that has perhaps most bearing on the special problem of our discussion, the discovery of world community. Leaving aside practical problems and confining ourselves now to principle, we are confronted by one main consideration. International brotherhood, as the word "international" indicates, starts from the nation as a given fact. The endeavour is to build up on the basis of nations a brotherhood in which they may all find themselves. But the unity which lies at the base of the life of the Church is different from that. It begins not with an aspiration after brotherhood on the part of separated elements or units; it offers at the very start of all inquiry the given fact of unity in Christ. It says not "Become brethren," but rather "Sirs, ye *are* brethren."

We can sum up our whole discussion by saying that the Church is different from and peculiar among all the societies of mankind. It is dual in its nature. On one side it is human, and like all human things it is stained with sin. It is an institution to which the sociologist may properly give his attention. It can be classed and examined and subsumed under categories; the human forces that have contributed to it can be stated and evaluated. But it is also something else, and it is

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this that constitutes its power and meaning. It is also divine, a society owing its origin to the act of God; its distinguishing mark is that no one is good enough to become a member. This dual life is with it always. It speaks in the language of every land and people; it is one of the multitudinous groupings of historical humanity. But within humanity it speaks of God. It brings to bear upon our human prides and certainties the searchlight of the divine judgment and the divine love.

To this we must add a thought implicit in what has been said, but not yet made explicit. Because the membership of the Church is based upon God's loving act, the relationship cannot end with death. In its belief in the Communion of Saints the Church has held to the truth that its members are not only those who live on earth, for they are one in fellowship with the "glorious company," the "goodly fellowship," the "noble army" sung in the Church's great hymn of praise, *Te Deum Laudamus*.

CHAPTER III

THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL EXISTS

It is time now to turn from the consideration of what in principle and fundamental character the Church is, to a discussion of actual realized achievement. Has anything happened in the world of historical experience and event that at all corresponds with this vision and promise of a Divine-human society, enshrining within humanity the eternal values, and continuing the Divine work of redemption? In particular, is it possible to point to a world-wide Christian community and to urge with seriousness that it has something important, perhaps decisive, to say to those who search anxiously for the principles of world community?

How many Christians in Britain realize the astonishing expansion of Christianity that has taken place during the last century and a half? To most of us, even to many who are deeply concerned with the world-wide task of the Church, what matters is the life and record of the churches in our own land, with some regard also to Europe and America. We are inclined to feel that the tides are against us, that organized Christianity is being pushed into a corner. Not that self-criticism

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is wrong; it is good that we should scrutinize, with a total absence of facile complacency, the state of our Christian communities here in the older Christian West. We have been too apt to think of Christianity as a power in the world, akin to other powers. That was never a spiritual thought, and the way to recovery of spiritual power may well lie, now as in other ages, along the line of contrition and recognition of our own utter weakness. But it is no part of our Christian discipleship to be ignorant and careless of the actual achievement which the Divine grace has made possible in our time, and that achievement is perhaps the most astonishing in all Christian history.

We have urged that it is a mark of the Church that it is universal. The old word "œcumenical," now again coming into use, meant to imply that there was about the Church a universality co-extensive with the inhabited world, the "œcumene." It was easier to think in those terms when the inhabited world that one knew about was the lands round the Mediterranean basin. But our inhabited world is a different and vaster world, and it has not been until this relatively recent period of the last hundred and fifty years that in a large part of it there has been a Church effectively present. It would not be possible to talk, as so many now do, about the "œcumenical Christian movement," or even about approximation towards an "œcumenical" Church, were it not for the missionary movement, so often derided and never taken seriously by more than a moiety of professing Christians. If

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to-day it is true, as it most certainly is, that the holding of a world Christian gathering without representatives present from the Churches of India, China, Japan, Africa and other lands distant from Europe and North America would be regarded as an unwarrantable proceeding, that is due, under God, to the missionary movement, that amazing manifestation of the authentic Christian spirit of witness and compassion.

It is estimated that just before the great financial depression, which affected missionary enterprises like other things, there were 30,000 Protestant (or non-Roman) missionaries in the world, and another 30,000 Roman Catholic missionaries.¹ Probably the total cost, annually, was at that time about £18,000,000. These figures relate to missionaries in the ordinary sense of that word, that is, to people who had left their own countries to labour in others. There are to be added to these, as we shall see, vast numbers of workers of the different countries in which the Church has grown. Let us, however, for the moment concentrate on the fact that within our own recent experience the organized Churches have found within their membership, equipped, sent abroad and supported this great host of ambassadors. Moreover, unlike the record of earlier periods in the expansion of the Church, the greater part of the necessary funds have been voluntarily contributed by literally millions of individual

¹ These figures are taken from Chapter II of Prof. K. S. Latourette's *Missions To-morrow*, a chapter which provides the best brief sketch of the missionary movement to be found in English.

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Christians, most of them poor. The vast enterprise has survived the terrific strains of a Great War. It is still going on to-day, facing its ever new tasks and difficulties with undiminished vigour. It is still the case to-day that a certain number of the very ablest and finest spirits among the young graduates of our Universities will every year desert the prospects of honour, comfort and power open to them in the lands of their birth, and offer themselves for this labour. These are undeniable facts, and they prove to demonstration that as a world force, using its own type of weapons, the Church is alive.¹

Let us attempt a cursory survey of this widely flung Christian community, and see what lies behind these summary figures.

THE FAR EAST

The eyes of the world are on the Far East. What of the Church of Christ there?

Japan was only accessible to the missionary enterprise, as to all other contacts with the West, from the middle of the nineteenth century. The older Christianity planted by the Roman missions of the counter-Reformation was almost wholly eradicated by ruthless persecution, and Protestant

¹ On the Protestant side the lead has been taken by the United States and Great Britain, but the Churches of Germany, Holland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, France, Switzerland, Belgium and the British Dominions have all played their part. On the Roman Catholic side France had, up to the War, the predominant share, but all the European and American countries have contributed their portion. It has been a truly international activity.

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and Roman Catholic, Anglican and Orthodox alike have had no more than seventy-five or eighty years in which to work. The Japanese Christians, all told, number less than half a million, a tiny group in a population of seventy millions. But it is widely admitted that they have influence far beyond their numbers. They are drawn largely from the urban middle classes. For this there are perhaps two main reasons. The Christian religion came along with the Western contact, and it was not unnatural that it should find readiest response among those to whom the new education and cultural ideas made appeal. Christianity is still in Japan, as it was remarked in Tokyo to the writer, "the teaching." But another reason may be found in the fact that the intensely proud national spirit of Japan made Japanese Christians unwilling to depend more than for a time they must upon the financial assistance of Western Christians. There is no doubt that Christianity in Japan is already more independent of the aid of the West, at least financially speaking, than in any other Eastern land, and it may be that this has tended to direct the appeal especially to those who could help to shoulder the burden best. But it would be a profound mistake to think that Japanese Christians are not aware of their aloofness from the rural masses; they are deeply aware of it, and when the present war broke out they were full of plans for advance in rural Japan.

In the world of education and the professions, Japanese Christians are prominent far beyond their

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numbers, and the missionary enterprise has had profound effects upon Japanese life. Verbeck, a famous early missionary, had much to do with laying the foundations of the Imperial University system, and the famous Doshisha University, which owed its inception to a Christian Japanese, Nee-sima, is still one of the notable institutions of Japan. When the present Emperor was crowned, three of the five men who presided over the Imperial Universities of Japan were Christians. In the education of women Christians have taken a leading part.

It is characteristic of the Christian record in Japan that the Japanese Christian most widely known to the whole Christian world, Toyohiko Kagawa, should have distinguished himself by his insistence on the Christian message in its bearing upon economic problems. Japan is by far the most highly industrialized country of the East, and it is in Japan far more than in India or even China that the typical economic problem of the West is to be found. Kagawa is not only a man to whom the Government of Japan has repeatedly turned for help in matters affecting the welfare of the industrial classes, but one who has offered to the world, in his co-operative movement, what he believes to be a specifically Christian way of solving the economic problem.

Moreover, Japanese Christianity has had profound influence upon other Japanese religions. Buddhism in Japan has learnt from Christianity to be a teaching religion, and Buddhists have widely

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copied missionary methods of religious education and social service and have a Young Men's Buddhist Association. On Shinto—the most Japanese thing in Japan—Christian influence has naturally been much less, though it is said that certain Shinto sects owe something of their inspiration to Christian ideas.

Japan to-day is in the thralldom of influences very different from those which ruled her when she decided to come into the full stream of the world's life and opened her doors to the West. To-day it is a source of suspicion and difficulty to the Christian Church that it is universal. At a time when the cult of State Shinto with its emphasis upon the divine quality of Emperor and people is being pressed very hard indeed, a religion which unequivocally puts God above all created things and links the believer in a fellowship with other Christians all over the world is not popular. Christianity is necessarily committed to both these positions.

In Korea, which is a part of the Japanese Empire but a country with highly distinctive characteristics, there is a Christian Church of relatively greater size than that of Japan. Christianity has been an influence of great power in Korea. The Church, in certain of its branches, has shown extraordinary evangelistic zeal, and Korean Christians have actually carried on at their own charges missionary work in China. Because education was Japanese and the Koreans, though with little hope, still nurtured the desire for independence, the mission schools and colleges have been specially

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dear to them as their chief opportunity for education on lines more or less national. The present grievous conflict with regard to the acceptance of Japanese shrine worship by the Christian schools of Korea gains some of its bitterness from the fact that Korean Christians, though they may dislike the shrine-worship and know it to be incompatible with their Christian profession, are yet intelligibly anxious not to let go the schools which are their chief hope of a liberal education for their children.

In China the record of the Church is very different from that in Japan, for there is a more normal distribution of the different classes of the people within it and in certain parts of China considerable progress has been made in great rural groups. Roman Catholic Christianity has been more or less continuous in China since the sixteenth century, and it is probable that a community of approximately three millions now accepts the Papal authority. Protestant Christians are in numbers considerably smaller, being barely a million strong. They have, however, exercised a quite extraordinary influence upon the life of China through the large number of Christian Chinese who have held important office in government, education, medicine and social reforming enterprises. It is well known that the present unchallenged leader of the Chinese people, General Chiang Kai-shek, is like his brilliant wife an earnest Christian. Dr. H. H. Kung, who headed the Chinese delegation to Great Britain at the time of the Coronation, is a prominent Christian. Several

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members of the Chinese government belong to the Church, and the share taken in the modern leadership of China by Christians, mainly of the Protestant churches, is quite outstanding. Not least has this been shown in the way whereby the New Life Movement, General Chiang's own chosen method of reviving the spirit of China, has had Christian guidance and leadership, and a missionary labouring in it has been made the principal colleague of the General in the development of the work.

No doubt the Chinese, if left to themselves, would somehow or other have gained the mastery of the Western educational technique, learnt modern medicine, and entered into the modern world family. They are, when all is said, perhaps the most remarkable of all the races of mankind, and they were deterred from addressing their abilities to the mastery of Western civilization mainly by the doubt whether they could possibly have anything to learn from it! However that may be, the historical fact is that the share of organized Christianity in helping China to this knowledge, and in making constructive and positive a change which must always contain revolutionary elements, has been very great indeed. If one thinks only of the vast amount of suffering relieved by medical missions and by the Chinese doctors trained in the mission hospitals, the service is immense. China owes her introduction to modern medicine almost entirely to missionaries, and even to-day her debt to them is great. In fighting the opium traffic and

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other entrenched social evils the Christian forces have borne the brunt of the work. Some of the most enterprising rural work being done anywhere in China is in charge of Christians, and the well-known movement for mass education is inspired by Dr. James Yen, a Chinese Christian.

There is, however, nothing that has so clearly demonstrated the fact that there is real Christianity in the Far East as the manner in which both Japanese and Chinese Christian leaders, in face of the powerful mass sentiment engendered by war, have resolutely determined to keep the bond of Christian fellowship with one another. In May, 1937, a group of Japanese Christians visited China for the purpose of holding retreat-conferences with Chinese Christians and talking frankly over the outstanding issues between their countries. It was intended that a return visit should be paid to Japan by the Chinese, but the outbreak of the war made this impossible. Lately an open letter was published by the Japanese Christians, addressed to the Christians of China through the two National Christian Councils. In this letter the Japanese say ". . . This war will not continue indefinitely. We must heal the wounds caused by this clash. We believe that the day of peace will bring heavy responsibility to the Christians of the two nations. We yearn that striving together we may not fail in that responsibility." Mere conventional piety, it may be said, but did England and Germany show as much determination to keep the Christian bond in 1914?

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THE ISLAND WORLD

Passing on in our survey we may next mention the Netherlands Indies, in which the Dutch have exercised sway since the beginning of the seventeenth century. Not many Anglo-Saxons are aware of the existence of great Christian communities in these islands. There are in round numbers about a million and a half Protestant Christians in these islands and over a quarter of a million of Roman Catholics. Java presents the spectacle, rare enough in the world as we shall see, of a Church steadily growing by the addition of converts from Islam, now numbering some 30,000. In Sumatra there is a Church among the Batak tribes that offers one of the most striking examples to be found anywhere of the transformation wrought by Christianity among savage peoples, for the labours of German missionaries have built up among a people once cannibal a Christian community of some half a million.

It is not possible within the dimensions of this chapter to do more than to select some of the greater fields for mention, and we must pass over such regions as the South Pacific, though the record of the growth of the Christian Church among the islanders is full of interest. Here was to be met a special problem, namely, the juxtaposition of very primitive peoples with numbers of European traders; the missionaries had unusual difficulties with which to contend and the strongly missionary character of the native churches—some of them,

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like the Samoan, sent their own members as missionaries to far distant islands—shows how thoroughly the work was done.

INDIA

But we pass on to India. Here is one of the lands in which the effect of the coming of Christianity has been enormous, both in its direct and in its indirect results. There are about six and a half millions of Christians in India, of whom nearly three millions are of the Protestant communions, about three-quarters of a million of the Syrian Churches that claim to go back to the Apostle Thomas and have on the most moderate estimate been in south-western India for well over a thousand years, and the remainder Roman Catholic. (One section of the Syrians owns the Roman obedience.)

Two outstanding facts confront the student of Christianity in India. The first is the great gatherings that have taken place in the past, and are taking place to-day, among the lowest section of the Hindu population, the outcastes or untouchables. Of these over 200,000 a year are receiving instruction for baptism and a very large majority of the whole Indian Church comes ultimately from that stratum of Hindu society. To-day the case of the untouchable has been taken up, under the inspiration of Mr. Gandhi, all over the country, but for generations when no one in the whole of India cared what happened to the outcastes, the Chris-

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tian missions were bringing to them education, medical and social help, but most of all the religion which enabled them to stand up and become men. Whatever may be the end of the long story of Hindu caste, and whether or not the curse of "untouchability" is finally removed from India by an awakened Hindu conscience, history will not fail to tell of the new life and hope that the Christians brought to literally millions of these poor folk. Nor have these been merely nominal adhesions, carrying with them no real change beyond that of name. Poor as the bulk of the Christians of India are, because of the social class from which they mostly are drawn, their rate of literacy is about three times as high as that of India as a whole, and the literacy of their women about ten times as high as that of the generality of Indian women. In India, as in so many other countries of the East, it is the Christian missions that have been the pioneers in educating women and girls, even when the whole inherited tradition of the country was against it.

But the other great effect of the coming of Christianity to India has been upon the society and the religion of India, apart from the actual conversions to Christianity. Such recognized authorities as the late Dr. J. N. Farquhar¹ have shown how deep was the effect of Christianity upon Hinduism and the reform movements within Hinduism. Hinduism is a religion by nature absorptive, and it is not surprising to find the large extent to which Hindus are willing to include Christ within the

¹ See his *Modern Religious Movements in India*.

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Indian pantheon, or at least to make Him a primary source of religious and moral inspiration. While Christians who are jealous for the purity of Christianity may watch this process with some apprehension, there is nothing but reason for thanksgiving in the fact that Christian moral and spiritual ideas have so largely entered into the context of Indian educated life. The young Hindus who said to a missionary, in discussion over the public problems of India, "of course, Sir, it is our Christian duty to love our Mohammedan brethren" were paying a tribute to the extent of the silent sway of Jesus Christ. It is true, alas, that Mr. Gandhi appears to grow more and more impatient of the Christian evangelistic approach, but both he and the other great Indian leader, Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, have in their very different ways drunk deeply of Christian inspiration. The Hinduism to which, again in their different ways, they adhere is a Hinduism deeply modified by Christianity.

THE NEAR EAST

We move again westward to that great area known vaguely as the Near East. Here are the homelands of the religion of Muhammad, though they were Bible lands long before that. Abraham came out of what we now call Iraq, and St. Paul journeyed through Anatolian Turkey; Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople were all great names in the early centuries of the Church. To-day the scene is not wholly changed, for there are still Patriarchs

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of the famous sees, and Orthodox, Armenian, Syrian, Coptic and certain other ancient Churches trace back a continuous life to the old days. But around them is Islam, proud and intolerant. Even where, as in Turkey, the hold of Islamic orthodoxy upon the State has been greatly modified, the nationalism that has supplanted it does not look with favour upon Christianity. For on both sides it has been long accepted, in fact if not in theory, that religion is a matter of race, and is settled in accordance with racial affiliation. To be a Christian, therefore, in Turkey, will seem to mean that one ceases to be a Turk, for "Christian" has so long meant Greek, or Armenian, or member of some non-national group. Such a conviction is not demolished in a night, and one of the great tasks of missionary work in the Muslim Near East is to demolish it by works of love.

Alongside the ancient Churches, which are numerically considerable—there are, for example, approximately a million Copts in Egypt—there are much smaller Churches composed of converts. These have arisen in consequence of the work of missions, mainly from the United States, though Anglicans have had an important share. Most are drawn from the membership of the ancient Churches, for although the considered policy has been in almost all cases to seek to help the ancient Churches by stimulating reform movements, there have been groups that broke off through the strength of opposition to reform. There are also small groups of converts from Islam, but although

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in Iran such groups now form a strong and evangelistic Church, it must still be said that in the mass Islam remains almost untouched by the evangelistic effort of the Christian Church, and that so far as Church life is concerned there is a clear line of demarcation between Christian and Muslim, and but little of that natural intercourse which is the raw material with which reconciliation can work.

It is in the realm of educational, medical and social service that the influence of Christianity on the masses of Islam has been strongest. These lands are studded with colleges, schools and hospitals in which for many years Muslim, Jew and Christian have been served alike. The members of the Royal Commission on Palestine testify to the fact that in spite of the feeling existing between Arab and Jew, the Christian schools which embraced them both and the Christians as well remained open during the disturbances, and that at least while the children are in their schooldays the atmosphere and spirit of the schools is powerful enough to overcome the antipathies generated at home.¹ Great institutions such as the Robert College at Constantinople did an immense amount for the younger leadership of the Balkan states; Beirut has another American college doing great things for the whole Levant, and Cairo another. In such efforts it is possible to discern a spirit at work which can lift men above those rooted prejudices that a purely national or racial religion can do little but strengthen and make still more grievous.

¹ *Palestine Royal Commission Report*, pp. 341-2.

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AFRICA

In Africa the work of missions and the growth of the Church have been conditioned by forces totally different from those found in almost all the East. As we have seen already, the disintegration of the tribal society in the face of the incoming of European government, trade and education was inevitable. Those who blame the missionary for it—there are still some who do—cannot have reflected upon the magnitude and variety of the forces which make for the certain destruction of the older type of life. It is plain that if the European type of life has had great influence upon Asiatic countries, with their literary cultures, its effect upon the African economy must be still greater. Moreover, there has been up to a point a desire on the part of governments that Christianity should provide the principle of the newer African life, and particularly of its education. In British African territories this principle was expressly stated, and the Christian religion has been the basis of African education with correspondingly large government aid to the Christian schools. The numbers of Christians therefore are greater in proportion to the population than is the case in Asia. About five per cent of Bantu Africa is in the Christian Church; there are about three millions of Roman Catholics and about two millions of Protestants. What is more, the increase is large, steady and continuous. It is to be noted that the growth

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does not wholly follow the lines of governmental division. There are, for instance, as many Roman Catholic as Anglican Christian Africans in Uganda, which is a British protectorate, while the numbers of Protestants in the Belgian Congo are very large.

Looked at from the point of view of the student of social change, the Christian task in Africa is one of the most fascinating and most difficult anywhere to be found. There is no question that change, and great change, must come. How can the Christian Church help, and in particular how can it make the changes constructive and not merely destructive? We shall come back to these questions again. Here let us note that the record of the Christian Church contains such immortal names as that of Livingstone, who went to Africa as a missionary and was never a mere explorer; that in many areas and in the persons of obscure and unknown men and women the fight against the slave trade and for the human rights of Africans has been bravely carried on, and that starting in a literary and cultural sense so far behind the Eastern peoples, Africa has already given to the whole Church saints and leaders of unquestioned worth.

The vigour and initiative of African Christians have been shown in one of the rather disquieting features of African Christianity, namely, the multitude of separate Churches, especially in the South. Sometimes they have arisen from the desire to escape the Christian ban upon polygamy, but it is generally felt that they are in the main the expres-

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sion of the African's desire to be his own master in Church affairs, especially in territories where the economic and political predominance of the white man is overwhelming. Such movements as that connected with the widely discussed prophet Harris, on the Ivory Coast, indicate the power of Christianity to appeal to Africans and to control and remake their minds and their societies. Nowhere in the world is the liaison between the Christian worker and the scientific anthropologist more needed, and—it should be added—more often found in being. In education, as well as in the facing of the problems of a rapidly growing Church, Africa already has experiments and achievements to show which can teach the rest of the world.

A CHURCH LIVING AND WORLD-WIDE

To many of the issues raised in this chapter we shall return. But it must be added here that not only is there a growing Christian Church in all the great areas of the world, whether among the tribal societies or among the ancient cultures of the East, but the Church that is growing up, divided as it is, is yet conscious in a notably increasing measure that it is world-wide. We are now in the early years of a great new phase of universal Christianity. It may be said, very roughly and with many exceptions, that the "missionary" phase has been characteristic of a time when the rule of the whole world lay with the white Powers, and when the work of the Church was carried forward in the

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world by white men with the help, or at least with the aid of the prestige, of those powers. In such a time the "missionary" characteristic was inevitable. But there is now, as we have seen, in land after land a Church arisen. It may be small, in some cases it may have but little of the cultural tradition of the country, or may be but little emancipated from purely Western ways. But it is a living Church.

Now we move into days—nay, we are there already—when the prestige of the West is broken, when the forces of racial nationalism operate in the East and even in Africa as well as in Europe, and when the growing Church has different conditions to face. Here the leadership of the indigenous Christian is all-important. This is not to say—very far from it—that the day of the missionary is over. But it is to say that the work is essentially that of aiding the growth of the living Church, rather than of carrying into ever new regions the Church life of the West, prolonged as it were from its base.

Therefore the drawing together of the leadership of the indigenous Churches, as was done at the Jerusalem meeting of the International Missionary Council in 1928, and as will be attempted by the Council on a far larger scale when it meets in Madras in December of the present year, is of quite crucial significance. The process is aided, and the underlying tendencies of the present time are further illustrated, by the sending of missions from one "non-white" country to another. The visit

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of American Negroes to India on a mission to students was a revelation of what might be. Distinguished Chinese Christians have been listened to in India as only a very few white men are. There is in the world a Christian Church, living a common life in virtue of the eternal verities that are in Christ, and with all its weaknesses and divisions it is making itself felt in the midst of the world's life.

CHAPTER IV

CAN MEN BE CHANGED?

VISCOUNT CECIL began a notable speech, in the section of the Oxford Conference devoted to the international problem, by saying that in his judgment the most important duty of the Church was that of evangelism. He went on to explain that in a world which denied the chief and central teachings about God, man and the nature of society, by which the Christian religion stands and falls, the first duty is to seek to enlarge the numbers of those who do accept those central truths. It is not uncommon to find other lay voices urging this central duty of evangelization with a simplicity and forthrightness not always found in clerical circles.

THE CASE AGAINST EVANGELISM

Nevertheless, it is not to be forgotten that the Christian conviction of the universality of the Gospel and the consequent duty, lying upon all Christians, to make it known to all men, have been and are to-day regarded as insuperable barriers to world-wide concord and understanding. To a

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Christianity which is willing to be regarded, and to regard itself, as one among the many communities into which humanity is divided, and to seek for nothing more than the best available relations with others, no such opposition will be shown. But the historic element of exclusiveness and intransigence in Christianity—they are hard words, but it is well to state the case at its strongest—is thought by many critics in all parts of the world to put it out of court, as having nothing to say to world concord and community, and a great deal to say in the creation of division.

Take the point of view of the statesman or governor. Gibbon's famous jibe, that all religions are equally true to the believer, equally false to the philosopher, and equally useful to the governor, has its point, but governors have sometimes found Christianity a nuisance rather than a help. Obviously, a religion that claims to have a saving truth to declare to all mankind may easily become a source of social division. Is it not better to leave people as they are? A man who is governing a district containing populations of different religious beliefs is hardly to be blamed if he hopes that none of them will take to evangelizing each other. In India, for instance, the rivalry of Hindu and Muslim, while it has economic as well as religious roots, and is much less found among the younger nationalists in whom a greater passion of patriotism drives it out, is one of the acknowledged weaknesses and evils of Indian life. It cannot be a matter for surprise that Christian evangelism should be

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regarded by many people as one more instance of this zeal for communal aggrandisement.

Or take the point of view of the ardent nationalists, such as now largely control the life of the Asiatic countries. To them it cannot be easy to view without concern the advance of a religious community which claims to be universal. They care deeply for the peculiar type of culture associated with their country and people; they observe that in the main the impetus behind the Christian advance is derived from Western countries, which themselves have been guilty of secular ambitions in the East; they assume that under the guise of religious witness there is being attempted some new form of imperialist aggression. They will therefore protect themselves against it by placing legal difficulty in the way of the work. Education can be kept in national hands alone; conversion may be forbidden so far at least as legal recognition is concerned.

Again, there is the point of view of the student of religion. This business of preaching Christianity to people who already believe in their own ancient cults savours to him of the illiterate or sectarian fanatic. Surely, he will say, we have got past that. Is not the right attitude for Christians—even for those who may believe that the Christian faith is the purest and best—to enter into alliance with all other religions, and in common with them attack and withstand the forces of materialism and secularism? Judged by an ideal standard, these ancient, ethnic religions may be inferior to Chris-

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tian teaching, but what is the good of judging them by an ideal standard? They are, historically, the mould of the religious life of the peoples concerned; they suit them as they are; it is virtually certain that any attempt to uproot them will be attended by more harm than good.

To which we must add a consideration of quite a different kind. It is sometimes the most sensitive souls among professing Christians who are shyest of the idea of evangelism. It seems to them to savour of a personal certainty and self-sufficiency which they dislike, and to be inseparable in practice from the assumption that "I am holier than thou." They would welcome, and indeed long for, any natural and simple contacts with men and women of other faith, and through the ordinary traffic of friendship would be willing to share what they know, and to receive from others what they have to say of their own knowledge. But of anything like evangelistic work in the accepted sense they are afraid, chiefly because they cannot dissociate it from the assumption of personal superiority.

The first thing to be done in the face of these challenges is to admit that there is in every one of them a measure of truth. We cannot be too sure in our steps here. It is the central contention of this book that the secret of world community lies in that which is outside the human community, and that, therefore, the Christian gospel of God is no mere inessential element which can be surrendered under pressure, leaving certain community values that can be co-ordinated with others.

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It is the life and the truth or it is nothing. But for this very reason it is a matter of life and death for the Christian Church, at no matter how great cost in penitent self-examination, to be certain that the scandal which is caused to the urbane and liberal world by the exclusiveness of its claims for its Master is the real rock of offence to others. For it is all too likely that the offence of the Christian Church is not only or wholly the offence of the Cross, but the offence of faulty, proud, opinionated men.

It is perfectly easy for missionaries out of a combination of enthusiasm and ignorance to cause trouble to the administrator, trouble that need not have been caused, and which the administrator has every right to end by such means as the law provides. It is, again, all too easy, especially for the missionaries of Anglo-Saxon race, and for those who belong to imperial nations, to forget the sensitiveness of the nationalist temper, to omit the proper regard for it, and to insist as of right on privileges that ought to be asked as a boon.

It is, again, very easy to treat the actual church life, organization and teaching of a given Christian denomination as possessing all the eternal majesty and universal claim of the Gospel itself. Against that the claim of the comparative study of religion is unanswerable. Actual Christianity as it exists and is incarnated in the world is partly the Gospel and partly a religious institution which is to be judged as other similar institutions are to be judged. Nor should an ignorance, sometimes call-

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ing itself a "practical working knowledge," of the ethnic religions be allowed to pose as fidelity to revealed truth. The great Christian scholars in the field of the history of religion have always been men of reverence in the presence of what other men held sacred.

The fourth difficulty mentioned takes us deep into the truth. No one ought to preach Christ unless he knows something of what it is to be forgiven, but if only he knows that, he will surely be free from the notion that it is his own insight that he is proclaiming as superior. The Christian evangelist does not say, "Accept my more elevated culture." What he says, in brief, is "Come and see."

THE CASE FOR EVANGELISM

Here, then, we are at the very heart of the matter. The Christian religion asserts that the whole world of men, so varied in its life, and so deeply longing to find the secret of community, lies in the hand of God, who made it and found it to be good. It asserts that He is not only a Creator but also a Redeemer God, for to the world that by its own folly and pride had lost the way He gave His son. In Jesus Christ there is offered to man not only a picture of the character of God, nor merely an ideal of human living, but the Act of God in redeeming men and drawing them back to Himself. To the ordinary sinful man or group of men the Gospel says two things. It says, first, that something *has*

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happened. In that life and death and rising again there are to be beheld the central events of history; though they are past in the sense that historical events are past, they are contemporary to every man, for by faith a man can find the living God dealing with him in judgment and forgiveness in that same Cross and Resurrection. But, second, the Gospel says that something *can* happen. The stubbornness of human nature can be changed. Companionship with the living Christ can become so real an experience, not only for the "religiously disposed," but for the thoroughly average type of man, that we are remade from within, and do in fact become different people. The Christian society is the body within which this mystery is dispensed and these secrets known and made known. It is in ideal, and always to some extent in reality, a body living in the strength and joy of these great facts, and it invites men to join it so that they may know within this mortal life the meaning of the life everlasting.

To believe this, or anything like this, is without doubt to be bound and committed to the task of making it known. It is not possible to believe this and to regard it as a private privilege that others may, or at least need, not share. Still less is it possible to tell others about it with pride and condescension, as if it were we ourselves who had done these great things; or to use the ministry and passion of Jesus as the text for national or cultural aggrandisement; or not to be touched by the love of Jesus into a deeper sympathy with every honest

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effort after God, or glimpse of His mystery. This message of the loving act of God in Christ is what matters, as nothing else in the whole wide world matters. It matters, not only because it offers that object of devotion, beyond ourselves and our society, in virtue of which alone the tensions between the parts of our society can be relieved, but, far more important as well as far more simple, it is a message of the changing of the hearts of men.

Perhaps it is here that the friendly critic will hold up our argument, and he is right to do so. "Does this kind of thing happen? It is not enough to say that it once happened, or that it ought to happen if people would only believe more in Christ. Does it happen now, in different countries and peoples, that this transforming power of Christ works as you say it does and should?"

It is here that the witness of the wider Church throughout the world is of crucial importance. It is not meant by this to suggest that no evidence can be got in the Western lands; to talk so would be dangerous foolishness, though one sometimes hears appeals of a sentimental kind to the Churches of the East and Africa—so weak, if only the truth were known—to come and reconvert England and America to Christianity. No, the relevance of the evidence that comes from these younger Churches is that they exhibit the victory of the Gospel in circumstances wholly different from the Western conditions from which the missionaries came. A faith that really can transform men and women and recreate society across the boundaries of nation and

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race may not be easy to live with, nor as tolerant and urbane of temper as more static religions, but it can claim to have something to say to the establishment of world community. For we all know, deep down, that we need not only to be rightly related to one another, but to be made into better and different people.

There is no space in this book to do more than select a few examples of the effects of Christian evangelism. Purposely the examples chosen are favourable; what is the use of adducing examples where the work has been marred by error beyond the normal, and has little to teach anyone except by way of warning? It is admitted that what will be described is exceptional, but only in the sense that it is not yet general and widely experienced, not in the sense that it depends upon peculiar conditions and therefore provides no material from which we may argue.

THE EVIDENCE OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH: INDIA

Let India be heard. Something of quite extraordinary importance is happening there. It is perhaps unfortunate that the extent to which the new social and political movement has extended among the lower strata of Hindu society—the outcastes or untouchables—has obscured the essential nature of the Christian movement by groups and communities. There was two years ago the prospect that certain great groups of people belonging to the depressed classes would offer themselves *en bloc* to

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become Christians. The movement for the abolition of untouchability, led by Mr. Gandhi, and the opening of the temples in certain States, appear to have checked this tendency to look to Christianity as a social release from unbearable religious oppression. In so far as this movement indicates an awakening of conscience among caste Hindus, it ought to be welcomed by all men of goodwill. But there is no sort of evidence that the genuinely religious movement towards Christianity is growing weaker; on the contrary it gathers strength.

In the Telugu-speaking portion of the Madras Presidency, including also the larger part of the Nizam's Dominions of Hyderabad, there is taking place a comprehensive social change of a character and dimensions such as challenge inquiry.¹ During a couple of generations the two great groups of untouchables, known as Malas and Madigas—themselves acutely divided and everywhere at enmity—have been moving towards the Christian Church. There are now the greater part of a million Christians in this area, and the overwhelming majority have come from these disinherited groups. The reality and magnitude of the change wrought is not doubted by anyone who has studied it. Outwardly, it is shown in cleaner villages, in the cessation of the litigation which is the curse of the Indian country-side, in economic advance, in literacy and a rise in education, in more freedom

¹ See the two books by Bishop J. W. Pickett resulting from the special inquiry undertaken under the guidance of the National Christian Council of India, *Christian Mass Movements in India* and *Christ's Way to India's Heart*.

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and opportunity for women, and in general in an approach by these "depressed" peoples to the social standards aimed at but not normally achieved by the better caste people. But it would be wholly misleading to suggest that what has happened has in the main been the result of economic and educational activity. The truth is—and it is essential to the whole Christian claim—that *where only economic advancement and assistance have been offered little progress has come about*, and that where a definitely religious approach has been made and the spiritual need of the untouchables dealt with, not less seriously and competently than if they had been Brahmins, all else has followed in the train of spiritual change.

We can now observe in these areas what one may call a classical example of the Church at work in evangelism and the reconstitution of life that follows from it. It is necessary to have some understanding of the rigidity of the Indian caste system, and the stratification of society resulting from it, if the meaning of what is happening is to be fully plain. The caste men have been observing the change in those who have been for innumerable years their servants. They see a new self-respect in them. They notice that their children get some education, and that the parents want them to have it—two things not known before. They ask themselves what has happened, and the question takes them very far indeed. To-day, in this Telugu area where up to a few years ago hardly any of the Christians came from the castes, some scores of

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thousands of converts from the great middle castes, the backbone of village Hinduism, have professed Christ in baptism. All observers agree as to the reason, and the present writer has verified it for himself. It is, in brief, that they have been so moved by the witness of these poorer folk whose lives, corporate as well as individual, Christ has transformed, that they have sought for the same new power themselves.

A single example may be quoted out of the multitude available. Dr. Pickett quotes a conversation that took place during his inquiry. "The Brahmin sub-divisional officer, who was cynical about the motives that move Hindus of the higher castes to become Christians, had accompanied us to the village and was questioning a group of recently baptized Reddis as to their reasons for uniting with the Church. One of the group had replied that Christ had showed them their sins, made them penitent and changed their hearts. 'And what were your sins?' questioned the Brahmin. 'Adultery and fighting, idolatry, sorcery and oppression of our brethren,' came the answer. 'Whom did you oppress?' 'Our servants, these old Christians, whom we now love.' Just then seventeen Muslims arrived with a request that an Urdu-speaking teacher be assigned to teach them. 'Is it your purpose to be Christians?' we asked. 'Yes,' replied their leader, 'we have seen how strife has ended in this village, and masters and servants have been united in love. We want to be Christians too. We have never seen anything like this

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before, and we believe that it is of God.' The Brahmin sub-divisional officer remarked, 'There is something here I do not understand. These people are certainly sincere. If this is Christianity I am for it. It's what the whole country needs.'"¹

Two things may be added to this brief account. First, lest it appear that this is just a fairy-tale of supra-human perfection, it must be said that those working in the heart of the movement are well aware of the hang-over of the old ways, or the continuance sometimes of old caste asperities and of other humanly inevitable drawbacks and weaknesses. It is amusing to read of an educated Hindu youngster criticizing the new Christians in his village as "only nominal Christians" on the ground that "not more than half of them have become real friends and brothers." All the evidence goes to show that, with every allowance for imperfection and falling back, there is being established in the heart of Hindu society the recognition of a new and life-giving principle by which the ordinary life of men can be transformed.

The other point is this. It is easy to approve of such work when it has reached a point where success is obvious and its social values not to be denied. But it had to begin with the unpopular preaching of the Gospel to people who looked almost beyond redemption. It had to begin with the unequivocal presentation of what some would call a "proselytizing" message. It meant believing that people who were steeped in debt, disease,

¹ *Christ's Way to India's Heart*, pp. 57-8.

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ignorance, crime and mutual hatred could be reborn in Christ, and it meant also braving the hostility of religious orthodoxy that did not believe that anything could be done with the untouchables and did not want the experiment tried. It is essential to face these facts squarely if the nature of the Christian Church and the principles of its growth are to be understood, and the sole condition upon which its aid in the creation of a true community among men can be sought.

AFRICA

Here is another instance taken from a country and people wholly different from India. In a part of the Belgian Congo there has been growing over a period of some three years a movement of spiritual transformation which began with the existing groups of Christians and developed into a profound social change among the mass of the population. The movement began with a conviction that the Church was rotten. There was fluency in preaching and prayer side by side with moral impotence. The Christians were guilty of witchcraft, sorcery, adultery, drunkenness and other sins of ordinary heathenism, and the tone of the Church was so low that a change seemed almost impossible. First, there was prayer by the little group of earnest people, followed by preaching that called for repentance, and then a conference between missionaries and African workers. But this seemed to make things only worse, for it seemed to the

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Africans that the challenge that was put forward was only the claim of a group of white men to dictate to the Africans, and the whole of the African officials of the little church resigned. Then, after months of tension and waiting, the turn came. One young man, a carpenter just finishing his apprenticeship in the employment of the mission, found himself led through the breaking of pride to a complete obedience to God and a vivid realization of the power of the life that Christ gives. His public testimonies, halting as they were, created a deep impression on those who heard them; four more young men joined him, and then the fire took hold. The radical hypocrisy and sham of the life of the Christians was at last exposed, and open acknowledgment was made to the non-Christians around them that there had been in the Christians no true Christianity. The non-Christians knew well what the truth had been, and it was a true instinct that led the Christians to feel that unless there were open confession made there could be no advance among the wider masses of the people. Then came a great movement of the Spirit of God among the non-Christians. Old men and women, who had been for a lifetime addicted to witchcraft, sexual immorality and drunkenness, found the power to cast these things off. The numbers who desired to be taught became far greater (as in India) than the regular forces of the Church could manage, and the voluntary services of the ordinary members of the Church, especially the women, were brought into play. At last, it is said, "right-

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eousness is beginning to flow as a mighty stream through the life of the community . . . a new breath has blown through village life." Men were no longer afraid to attack abuses, for the spirit of fear had been conquered.¹

This sort of thing, incalculable as the blowing of the wind, could be paralleled in the records of most missions. It is, of course, full of danger, for the breaking up of the great deeps of human personality in the mass is a very dangerous thing. Studied in detail, much of the colour and form and method, and much of the special difficulty, would be purely African. Yet, when all is said and done, here once more we have the same testimony as that of India, that the supplanting of hate, division, malice and fear as the constituents of society by love, joy and peace can be accomplished, but only by the surrender to that Other than ourselves in whose infinite love and understanding man's life finds its only true fulfilment.

THE FAR EAST

Or go half across the world, from West Africa to Japan. The Church in Japan, as we have seen, is strongest in the cities and the middle-class. But it has given to the whole Church of Christ one man of religious genius, Toyohiko Kagawa. Much has been written of him, and his own books are translated into English, so that the message he delivers

¹ The story is told in full by A. MacBeath in the *International Review of Missions*, July, 1938, pp. 415-23.

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and the secret of his life are plain to see. His insistence upon the co-operative society as the prime expression in corporate life of the Christian spirit has sometimes obscured from view, though never to those who read or hear him, the deepest conviction of his whole life. It is possible to doubt the claims that Dr. Kagawa makes for his co-operative method; it is obviously valid up to a point, but it is defended both by him and his friends as a way of solving the social problem in terms not different from the ordinary optimistic liberal idealism. This is not the heart of his message. There is no Christian leader anywhere to-day for whom the living out of the Cross of Christ is more plainly the heart of Christian discipleship. For him there is a great struggle in the world between two ways of dealing with social evil. He has lived so much among the very poor, and suffered for them in his own body, that he seems almost implicitly to regard the problem of the very poor, and of the social maladjustment that causes and continues extreme divergences of wealth, as the central problem. To this the Marxist addresses himself and, as Kagawa sees, has something definite to say. But, says Kagawa, "though I am one of the leaders of the social movement in Japan, I am convinced that Marx will not win in Japan nor in China. . . . Love is the basis of society. If we want to have a real society we need love. And when we want to put love into practice, then we come to the crucifixion of Christ. Therefore I have a firm conviction. I do not know whether the

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doctrines of Christianity will win or not, but I am sure the love of Christ will win in Japan and in the Orient. That is the reason I preach day and night and give testimony to this love of Christ. If our friends preach the doctrines of Karl Marx, I'll preach the crucifixion of Christ. . . . In the crucifixion there are two kinds of love, the fatherly kindness of God and the brotherly kindness of man. In the crucifixion we have no mere 'social gospel'; in it we have the Gospel of God and the Gospel of humanity. In the crucifixion we find the truth of religion. We find there the Truth, the Life and the Way. But I tell you the crucifixion is not a doctrine. It's a truth of *life*. It's not enough merely to honour and respect the Cross. Unless we bear the Cross of Jesus to-day, in China, in Japan, in the Orient, religion is meaningless. We must go forth in the spirit of Christ to bear the Cross, and then we find the love of Christ in life."¹

We have here a voice speaking the same language as that which we have heard from India and Africa. Kagawa may in his social writings seem to underestimate the difficulty of effecting social change where great vested interests are concerned. But he sees with absolute clearness that the forgiveness and love that are set forth in the Cross are the sole hope of the remaking of human community. No one can be a mere optimist who has taken the Cross into his life, and there can be few in the Christian world to-day who have so

¹ Taken from *Whither Asia* by the late K. J. Saunders, pp. 111-13.

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gladly borne the stigmata as this Japanese samurai turned Christian.

Last, we may take some evidence from China. The Western newspapers have lately contained tidings from China about the Easter message of General Chiang Kai-shek, and the words spoken by both him and his wife about the value set by them upon the Christian spirit and life as manifested in China. Those who receive letters from Chinese and missionary friends in China, and are in touch with the spirit that is being shown by the Church in that tortured land, know well what lies behind these pronouncements. One gets the impression of indomitable courage and hope and serenity, shown alike in the resilience of spirit that will see well-laid plans ruthlessly scrapped and new ones made, and in the deep resolve not to be parted by war from fellowship with Japanese Christians.

But what lies behind the fact that there is to-day in China a Church, small though it be in comparison with those great masses of humanity, that manifests such a spirit? Under God, it is the forward evangelistic movement inaugurated after the Jerusalem meeting of the International Missionary Council in 1928. From that meeting the trusted and beloved Dr. Cheng Ching-yi and his friends went away pondering, and in their hearts was born the conviction that God called the Church in China to go forward. They launched the "Five Years' Movement." They aimed—in so far as they had before them a definite and numerical goal—at doubling the numbers of the Church in China.

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That proved not to be the result that God had in store for them, but something deeper happened. At a time of great stress in China, when flood and banditry and economic difficulty made the corporate life of the people one long struggle with adversity, and Chinese Christians, few and weak as they were, might have been forgiven if they had thought that nothing more could be asked from them than that they should dig themselves in and wait for better days, they decided to go forward. It saved the soul of the Church. Dr. Cheng and his friends could not have foreseen that they were being led into a spiritual discipline for the Church which should prepare it for service in the day of China's agony, but who shall say that that was not just what happened?

Again, however, we observe the same returning to the ancient truths. The Christian Church has nothing at all to give to the world, anywhere or in any nation, except by its faithfulness in preaching the word of the Cross. To the distressed kingdoms of men it cannot offer secular wisdom, or a new technique in government, or a fresh economic insight. It can only say, "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is here."

CHAPTER V

REMAKING SOCIETY

WE have dealt first with the work of the Christian Church in making the gospel known, because that is the characteristic labour of the Church, and the one upon which all else depends. But it is very necessary to supplement this statement with some account of the manifold activities which are carried on all over the world by the Church in all its branches, in education and social service, in medical aid and instruction, and in a great variety of ministries which it is by no means easy to catalogue.

What purpose inspires this multitude of teachers and doctors, nurses and professors, agriculturists and experts on co-operative banking, scout-masters and public health men? Is it the same as that of the evangelist and preacher, and the men concerned almost wholly with the specific task of upbuilding the local churches? Can this whole multiform enterprise be interpreted by a single principle? It is perhaps—nay, almost certainly—the greatest single piece of unselfish service by men and women of one race for those of many races that the world has ever known. To these, called missionaries, are

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to be added the far larger number of people of the different Eastern and African lands, engaged in the same tasks alongside of the foreigner, and now assuming in every country far more of the leadership which must be theirs ultimately everywhere.

Many would put first the sheer fact of human need, and feel that when that is stated and understood there is no more that needs to be said. The great Albert Schweitzer, a master in theology and music, made himself a master in a third discipline, medicine, because he felt it intolerable that the medical and scientific knowledge which Europe possessed should be kept back when Africa was full, beyond what imagination could bear to contemplate, of unrelieved suffering. Those who have read the works of that eminent man will understand how much more, and in particular how much more of religion, there was in it than that, but it seems to be true that it was this overmastering sense of human need, and of the indecency of withholding the power to meet it, that first moved him. "There is a law, the last to be broken, that if you know a thing, and by the doing of it you can save a life, you must do it."¹

Others—and here the practical and frequently optimistic Anglo-Saxon comes into the picture—have believed that by labouring in these fields of work they could make some progress towards the building up of what they believed to be a Christian civilization. They held that if they and others

¹ A. E. W. Mason, *Running Water*.

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like them put their strength into education or medicine as a part of the whole Christian effort to bring about a better order of things, they could build up a bit of the city of God, destroy some evil and substitute some good, make Christian ideals of life known and attractive.

Mostly, however, the underlying purpose, however phrased and consciously understood, would be rather more radical than either of these. These multitudinous activities are thought of as ways of interpreting and expressing the spirit of Jesus. If you are faced by a huge mass of people who are and always have been hungry, and for whom life holds literally nothing of amenity and hope, most people feel that Christian love demands some sort of service, and that whatever message a man may have to declare will not be understood unless and until it is also incarnated in the form of practical service. It is important to understand that this is a somewhat different motive from that mentioned in the second place above. It means that all the practical work that is done is a kind of witness to Christ, and is to be done equally and with no less fidelity in circumstances where it is impossible for Christians to hope to achieve much, judged by the standards of secular progress, economic change and educational efficiency. It remains necessary to interpret and witness to Jesus Christ by every means and along every avenue of the world's life, if haply some who might have missed Him may be drawn by some humble and faithful act within the orbit of His power and love.

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EDUCATION

It is possible in the scope of this chapter to choose only a few typical expressions of this principle. Let us take, first, education. The share that the Christian Church in all its parts has played in the education of the East and of Africa is gigantic. Even to-day the larger part of the education that is given to the African native—it is far too little—is given by Christian agencies, usually with the active backing of governments. Lately it could be said that in India about a quarter of the total education of the Indian people was in the hands of Christian bodies, and much the same was true of China. Probably in the case of both countries the proportion is now less, and it is bound to decrease as the resources both of governments and of private local generosity become more fully released. But it will not be forgotten, when later generations cast up their accounts, that the Christians did this pioneer work, and in the case of women and girls were everywhere the first to break the shackles and set them free to know and understand their world as their brothers were able to do.

The Christian educational provision extends all the way from the bush school of Africa or the simple rural primary school of India and China, to the University and college. Considered technically, the work is worthy of admiration. Mr. Arthur Mayhew, who speaks out of years of official oversight of education both in India and in the

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British colonies, has repeatedly asserted¹ that the educators of the home country make a mistake if they think that the schools carried on by the missions abroad are educationally below standard; from many of them, in his opinion, and from the inventive and resourceful spirit shown by the teachers, much is to be learnt by those who enjoy the more favoured conditions of the home lands.

One of the most striking ways in which this fact is now being demonstrated is the growing movement for the reduction of illiteracy. This is now a movement of very wide dimensions, for the popular leaders in such countries as India, China and the Philippines set the goal of national literacy among their most cherished aims. It is widely recognized among the educated national leaders of the East that such illiteracy (over 90%) as India still suffers, and similar figures in other countries, ought to be removed, and that the complete national literacy of Japan is not a wholly unapproachable objective. The Christian Church can already claim in all the Eastern countries in which literacy is low that for its own members it has achieved something better than the average; there are, for example, 28% of the Indian Christians literate. But the Christians realize that for the continuance and life of the Christian Church the attainment of literacy is, if not an absolute essential, certainly the next thing to it. Dr. Hivale, presiding over the annual Conference of Indian Christians last year, set as the aim of the conference

¹ See *The Education of India*.

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the attainment of a literate Christian community in four years. For the great mass movements towards Christianity the discovery of a simple method of teaching adult illiterates to read is a necessity; Bible-reading and the spiritual growth of a new church are bound up together. It is in this field of the removal of illiteracy that Dr. Laubach, an American missionary who worked for many years in the Philippines, has made so valuable a contribution. His method¹ consists in the discovery of those most commonly used words in each language which contain among them all the sounds of the language, combined with a kind of snowball procedure whereby each illiterate teaches another every bit that he has learned before he learns any more. It has been so successful in the Philippines among the primitive Moros that it has been officially adopted by the U.S.A. administration. It has now, in successive tours, been adapted to several of the Indian scripts and languages and to certain of those of Africa, as well as to Arabic. Dr. Laubach himself offers an admirable instance of the way in which the zeal of the evangelist, coupled with a compassionate heart and a practical bent, may confer a great boon upon entire communities.

But the education carried on by Christian agencies in the East extends, as we have seen, far beyond the primary school and the teaching of the

¹ See *International Review of Missions*, April, 1936, for an account of the method by Dr. Laubach himself. It has very recently been found that illiterate outcaste converts in North India, taught on this method, learnt to read St. Luke's Gospel in one month.

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illiterate. What is the significance of the higher schools and colleges of which the Christian enterprise has produced so many? The case, so far as India is concerned, has been worked out in a manner at once brilliant and fascinating by the Master of Balliol's Commission,¹ and its report is worth studying by all who wish to understand the meaning of Christian education in the Eastern world. In brief, the function of the Christian college is to help in preparing the mind for the understanding of the Christian truth about God, man and the world. A century ago it was possible to hold with sincere conviction, what to-day would argue a singular naïveté, that the study of Western civilization and the reception of the ordinary Western education was a *præparatio evangelica*. To-day Indian educators are faced by a secularist temper, and irreligion is more common with the students than any kind of orthodox profession. The task of the Christian college, so far as the content of its curriculum is concerned, is twofold. It has to educate the mind away from the somewhat facile syncretism typical of Hindu thought, for which it is easy to conceive that all religions are true but very hard to believe that in any concrete event more than an aspect of the universal can be found. It has to fortify it also against that irreligious materialism of which India, like the West, is a victim.

To this end the Commission urged that the

¹ *Christian Higher Education in India*, see especially pp. 144-152.

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primary subject in a Christian curriculum is History. "Christianity is . . . a religion laying stress on the all-importance of a historical revelation, permeated through and through by the belief that the purposes of God are made manifest in human history. . . . But the study of history is equally important when we consider the other danger, the power in the modern world of the doctrines of historical materialism and scientific determinism. Historical materialism claims to be a philosophy of history, but it ignores the significance of individuals and of personality. . . . It attempts to treat history on the model of the abstract sciences, and only those who have studied histories in the individual and concrete can appreciate the defects of these new doctrines. . . . One of the most interesting developments in the curriculum of Christian colleges in India at the present time is the growth in the study of economics and politics. . . . The distinctive contribution which Christianity has to make to the problems of economics and politics can only be appreciated properly if these subjects are taught, as they should be, in relation to concrete historical study."

The Commissioners go on to urge that History as the central subject, Science on the one side and Art and Literature on the other, with Philosophy to counter the tendency to over-specialization, supply the necessary elements in a curriculum for a Christian college. The experimental nature of science, its readiness to test the truth of its own assumptions, and its objective quality all make it

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an invaluable element in a Christian curriculum. Art and literature open up the world of values, never more necessary than now, when the magical development of the applied sciences has set us all "far too much considering how things can be done and far too little considering what is worth doing."

We have dealt at some length with this matter, for it is a vital part of the whole claim of the Christian Church to be doing, in its widespread educational work, something really vital to the world. If Christian schools and colleges were merely private and unofficial replicas of whatever kind of school and college the government of the territory was concerned to create for itself, with periods of Bible teaching thrown in, little defence could be made of the employment of considerable numbers of able Christian men and women in such work. But they have a distinctive task, which is to use the engine of education for the making of Christ's revelation understood. "No man needs to be a philosopher before he can receive the Gospel, but men may be so obsessed by a bad philosophy that they cannot hear it."

MEDICINE

Now let us turn to the doctors and surgeons and nurses. Most people, even those who have no sympathy with evangelistic work, approve the labours of the medical arm of the Church. Livingstone went to Africa as a medical missionary, Pennell on

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the Afghan frontier was "worth a regiment of soldiers," so great was his influence for peaceful living, and there are many more. It is a great record. But it is not so well known that in China the whole fabric of medical education was begun by Christian missionaries and that the great Rockefeller gift to China, the Peiping Union Medical College, grew out of a missionary foundation and is still officially Christian.

Some figures drawn from India will serve to illustrate the magnitude of this service. There are in British India (1936 figures) 57,701 hospital beds for a population of about 276,000,000. The number of beds in Christian hospitals is 19,000, or a third of the whole. They were served by 390 Indian and 350 missionary doctors, and by 900 Indian and 300 missionary nurses.

A layman in medicine may perhaps be allowed to pay tribute to that superb tradition of self-sacrificing service which doctors have practised so systematically that they have caused us to assume that it is a part of the order of nature. How far is it a product of Christian discipline? That willingness to be at the patient's call; that horror of exploiting the patient; that dignified abstinence from making the advance of science a matter of private profit—can they survive in a secular world? At least Christians may say that for them these things flow from and are wholly congruous with the values that Christ teaches, and they may argue with some cogency that the maintenance of Christian medical work in the countries of the East and

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Africa will preserve, as nothing else will, the nobler elements in a profession which is, perhaps, more Christian than it knows.

It is interesting in this connection to notice that some of the most difficult, laborious and frequently hopeless departments of medical service are to be found in Christian hands in the East, out of all proportion to the service rendered by others. This is true in India of tuberculosis. It is notably true of leprosy all over the world. It is true in a large measure of such difficult and taxing service as that demanded by the blind, the deaf and the dumb. Such a fact speaks eloquently of the impact of the spirit of Jesus Christ on the lives of men and women.

VILLAGE NEEDS

What of the service rendered by Christian bodies in the field of economic and social life? There has been, perhaps, a greater fundamental diversity of judgment among Christians with regard to the social aspect of Christian responsibility than any other. Every phase of attitude is found, from whole-hearted absorption in concrete social schemes and programmes to a total avoidance of any complicity in what is felt to be, for the Church, an extraneous issue. But it is a remarkable fact that the growing emphasis that is being laid on the importance of the rural problem is awaking echoes in all Christian circles alike, and there is a convergence of purpose to bring the Christian mind and spirit to bear upon rural need.

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If in England the predominant economic and social problems are those of an industrialized country, those of all the countries of the East are agricultural and rural in type. Even in Japan, industrialized as no other Eastern country is, fully half of the people live on agriculture, and one of the gravest of Japan's internal problems is the disparity between the economic lot of the farmer and that of the city worker. But in India and China, the Netherlands Indies and the vast areas of Africa, the characteristic of social economy is that it is a rural economy. The Church that is growing up is a rural Church, and the people among whom it is growing up are rural people with rural minds. Moreover, as we have already seen, this rural society has been affected by the economic unification of the world; the world economic slump cut drastically into the prices that the farmer got for his crops, the factory-made goods both from foreign countries and from the mills of his own country push the products of rural industries out of the markets, the isolation of the village is broken down as communications improve and the motor-bus becomes ubiquitous. The rural world is not only important by its vast size, but it is changing radically and it needs help.

It is plain to anyone who penetrates even a little into the rural problems of the Asiatic countries that they need far-reaching action by the State, and that no private action by unofficial bodies can be a substitute for well-considered action by governments. Such phenomena as the crushing burden

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of rural debt, or the growth of absentee landlordism, accompanied by onerous conditions for the tenant farmer, are beyond the reach of private bodies to affect in any considerable way. A few facts may demonstrate the nature of the problem. In Japan approximately 31 per cent of the cultivators are owners, 27 per cent tenants, and 42 per cent part owner and part tenant. In China the disparity between the conditions prevailing in the north and south is remarkable. In the country as a whole it was estimated (these figures were, of course, arrived at before the present war) that from a half to three-fifths of the farmers were owners, and from a fifth to a quarter part owner and part tenant. But in the Yellow River area, subject to drought and famine, the percentage of owners was 69, while in the Yangtze valley and the south it was 32. In the rich provinces of Chekiang, Kwangtung and Fukien, occupied with oversea trade, the percentages of owner-cultivators were respectively 27, 30 and 9. Plainly there were here the makings of a first-rate agrarian issue, and China has had a stronger tradition of the owner-cultivator than either India or Japan. In India it is well known that the incidence of agricultural debt is a major problem of politics. In the Punjab the annual interest on agricultural debt is about 200,000,000 rupees, or four times the amount of land revenue chargeable on the provincial area. It is not to be wondered at that measures for the handling of rural debt figure largely in the programme of the new provincial governments of India, nor that to men

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such as Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru the most drastic handling of debt coupled with collectivized farming seems the only way out.

This governmental side of the question is to be emphasized, for it explains the limitations of the work of private bodies, such as, in this sphere, the Christian Church must be. It is useless to demand of the Christian Church that it should reconstitute the village life of India or Africa, when the forces concerned are wholly outside its control. But if this be granted, there is much that can be done, and it may with justice be said that much has been done. "Be ye rurally-minded," seems to have become a maxim of almost Scriptural authority in recent years in Church and mission circles in most Asiatic countries. In Japan the urban middle-class Church-people, well knowing their aloofness from the rural masses, are busy with plans for carrying into the villages an evangelism which should be accompanied by an intelligent understanding of rural problems. In China the Nanking Theological College has been distinguished for the thorough training which it gives to Chinese candidates for the ministry. Linked with the college are a number of village centres into which the college brings the help of minds trained in the principles of rural reconstruction, and from which it gains the priceless boon of intimate contact with the concrete actualities of rural life.

It is an impressive fact that General and Madame Chiang Kai-shek have almost insistently besought the help of the Christian forces in their rural plans,

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especially for those regions in which rural reconstruction was being undertaken after the expulsion of the Communists. The New Life Movement, which is the General's own creation, suggests the attitude of mind with which he and his wife approach their problem. It is in a sense an attempt to recover the ancient moral virtues of the Chinese tradition, and its four principles (*li, i, lien* and *chih*, translated "regulated attitude," "right conduct," "clear discrimination" and "true self-consciousness") are applied to the practical questions of food, clothing, shelter and social life. It means, in practice, a movement for honesty and cleanliness, social responsibility and common justice, using old Chinese ethical ideas, but welcoming and desiring the help of all who will come in. It is noticeable that Christians, both Chinese and foreign, have enjoyed a considerable degree of authority in the New Life Movement ever since its inception.

In India, as in China, the Philippines and other Eastern countries, the late Dr. Kenyon Butterfield, a distinguished American expert in rural economics, carried out a series of conferences which greatly clarified the thought of Indian Christians and missionaries on their duty in face of the rural need. The key to Butterfield's work was that he saw the supreme necessity of looking at the village life as a whole. His method was to take a contiguous group of villages, and in them to develop through the Church, the school, the hospital or dispensary, the co-operative bank and the home, a coherent plan for the rehabilitation of village life. A num-

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ber of such "rural reconstruction units" have been begun and carried on by Christian bodies.

In all such work there is one thing essential, and it is this that constitutes the main contribution of the Christian Church. It is not merely technical knowledge, though that is necessary. It is tragically easy, in the face of the ancient inertia of Asia and her long habituation to poverty and misery, to bring in from without advice and help on better seeds, better treatment of manure, better ploughing, co-operative marketing, village cleanliness and a score of other matters, and to discover, when the outside stimulus of official pressure or money grant is gone, that literally nothing is left. The one thing without which there can be no progress is change in the individual. He (and she) must see the thing that needs to be done, must want to do it and keep on doing it. The reason why the Generalissimo and his wife want the New Life Movement of China to have the fullest Christian backing is just that they want in it that personal, living tenacity of concern which Christianity can provide. Governments must face their own huge tasks in Asia, and much may have to wait until they do, but there can be no real success without this recreation of individual initiative and concern. This is something with which the Christians are notably able to help.

It is worth mentioning that the contribution of the universal Church to the Eastern and African countries has in this part of life, as in education, been distinctive. To put a man such as Professor

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Lossing Buck at Nanking University, to build up a first-rate centre of knowledge and research in rural matters, or to put into Allahabad such a man as Dr. Higginbottom of the Agricultural Institute, who has been an inspiration to people all over India and far beyond the circles of the mission, is to bring help from the world-wide resources of the Church to aid a whole country.

INDUSTRIALIZATION

We must turn now to another type of service rendered by the wider Church in regard to quite a different side of social need. Though the bulk of the peoples of Asia and Africa live in rural conditions, there are regions into which the industrial life of the modern West has already forced itself, where the evils of the Western factory system are repeated without the check of those ethical controls which—though only to a limited extent—the Christianity of Europe and America has imposed upon them. The factories of Shanghai, the iron-works of Hanyang, the mills of Calcutta, Bombay and Cawnpore, the industrialized masses of the great Japanese cities (Tokyo now boasts six millions of people) present a tremendous problem whether to the sociologist or the evangelist. Here are the centres in which more than anywhere else the old controls and moralities have faded out of being. Here are the maelstroms of humanity. People come into them from villages both near and far, and if the widely accepted view of Asiatic leaders

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in all countries is right, there will be great increases in these numbers. Often they do not stay for more than a few months, but the life which they live in the mill, factory or mining township makes them radically different people from what they were when they left their village homes. They are *déracinés*; they hardly belong to any community.

One wishes that it were possible to indicate any large measure of success that has been enjoyed by Christian, or indeed any other, organizations in tackling this problem as it arises in the Eastern cities. There is much being done, in welfare work, housing supervision, and in framing an evangelistic approach which may take account of their special needs. Yet it is impossible not to feel that just as in the West the industrial revolution caught the Church unawares, so the rapid development of large scale industry in the East has outstripped the abilities of the Christian and the humanitarian forces to mitigate its impact.

Sometimes a chance comes to step in before it is too late. Such a chance came in the copper belt of Northern Rhodesia, where one of the largest copper deposits on the surface of the globe had begun to be worked by American and British capital. The situation resulting was one to which the separate missions, or all of them in the area working together, could make little effective response, for it meant nothing less than the growth of a modern mining township, equipped with all the paraphernalia of modern industrialism, in the midst of a tribal society. Men came from great

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distances, lured by the attraction of high wages; they stepped at once from the tribal non-individual type of social organization into the Western individualized world. The problem was not primarily one of avoiding gross maltreatment of the workers, for the material side of life was well cared for. It was a question of human society, and the place of the individual in a society shaken by a cataclysm.

The Christian bodies at work in the copper belt invited the International Missionary Council to send a commission of inquiry, and this was done.¹ The result was a study of far-reaching importance. The economic aspect, including the emergence of the wage-economy in a tribal society, was examined, and the special problems raised for government by the new conditions. The sociological issues were dealt with in the most careful way, so that not only there should be a picture of the tensions and disintegrations found in the migrant workman, but some analysis also of the possibilities of reintegration. There was also a careful study of the possibilities of combined Christian service to the whole Belt. It can now be said that definite and important action has followed upon this study. A combined effort of a number of separate missions is organized in the copper belt, and what is essentially one single great problem is being faced by men and women specially trained and set apart for it.

¹ See the report of the Commission, *Modern Industry and the African*, J. Merle Davis. (Macmillan.)

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THE PRINCIPLE OF CHRISTIAN ACTION

It may be well, before we leave this brief survey of the impact of practical Christianity upon the changing world communities, to look once more at the question of principle. As we have said, it is wholly wrong, and indeed unreasonable, to treat Christianity as if it possessed a series of revealed political and economic programmes, and could guarantee the realization of ideal, or even better, conditions. The Kingdom of God and the realization of God's will are not to be identified with any type of society or culture. That way lies only disillusionment. But that is no ground for abstaining from all share in the world's concrete problems and struggles.

Christian service, so manifold and varied as it is, can all be gathered up under a single master word. It is *witness*, witness to Christ. It springs from His own touch on the hearts of men, and it is an expression of what He is and says and does in His eternal ministry. It cannot therefore, and it ought not to, be divorced from the work of preaching and the life of worship. It is an effort to make Christ real within the conditions of human life, to essay the healing of the woes of men as He would have us do, to show by the sincerity of service what it is that He has done for us. But it is for that reason always different from any campaign conceived solely with the desire and aim of achieving a specific piece of mundane service, and reaching a defined worldly goal. It does not approach the disorganized

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and kaleidoscopic communities of our modern world with the offer of a method of social organization which can be guaranteed fool-proof. It seeks to make real, within the texture of human society, sharing to the full in the agony of its perplexity and the continual sense of failure that is its human lot, the living society of Christ. It will seek to serve every real need and throw its weight on what it may judge to be the right side in the great secular struggle. But it will also be always a testimony to the divine way, and point beyond the things of this world to that which is beyond and yet to come.

Dr. Kraemer says some true and memorable things here. "The theocentric fellowship of Christ, the Church, if true to its essential nature cannot but express its service of God in service to man, just as Jesus Christ expressed it. If it lives by this inspiration, all its social and cultural activities will come from a deeper source than direct social and cultural aims can provide. It is not fired by utopianism, because it knows the world and what is in it, but it lives and acts by the love of God and by the desire to fulfil His will in a spirit of humility, longing for His Kingdom that transcends all kingdoms and societies. . . . The concrete way in which Church and missions to-day have to express this spirit and attitude is entirely different from that of the first centuries of the Christian era. . . . Natural and social sciences have put at our disposal many means of tackling the problems of human life that were not available in that period of history,

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while on the other hand, as a consequence of technical evolution, the problems are of far greater dimensions. . . . We cannot guarantee the cure of the world's evils by our man-made programme, but the greater the evils, the more it is incumbent upon us to battle strenuously against them, and especially so because the arms that are at our disposal are continuously on the increase through the ingenuity of the human mind. Church and missions have to be in this respect zealous pupils of the world."¹

¹ H. Kraemer, *The Christian Message in a non-Christian World*, pp. 434-5.

CHAPTER VI

THE CHURCH AND NATIONAL LIFE

It is necessary at this point to recall the course of our argument, and consider where it has led us. We began with an effort to see what lay behind the acknowledged fact that European society, our own included though up to the present time less markedly than that of some other countries, is in a state of disintegration. We found, also, that alongside of that tendency to disintegration there was another tendency visible, and that just as the older unity of European society had been rooted in the acceptance of the Christian revelation as the all-commanding truth, so now the new attempts at the remaking of community are based upon ideas or standards conceived to be absolute. But these absolutes, of race, class or nation, carry within themselves the necessity of disunity and mortal conflict. It is not possible to invest what is human and mortal with eternal and absolute value without finding that another rival absolute of human origin is raised up against it.

We found, also, that in spite of the widely different cultures and racial histories of the peoples of

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the East and of Africa, there were to be discerned among them, especially among those sections into which the corrosive forces of Western education and Western industrialism had entered, similar signs of the disintegration of the old type of society based on religious sanctions, and the emergence of new types of community and social loyalty closely analogous to those of the West.

Then we considered the message about God, man and society which lies at the heart of the Christian Church. We found there certain declarations which are of the greatest importance and most obvious relevance to our inquiry. These were: that God is before all things, and that the life of all human society rests in Him as Creator, Judge and Redeemer; that the deepest truth that mankind has to take into its mind, and work into its society; is the truth of the forgiveness of sins; that there is a wholly new understanding and estimate of man to be drawn from the knowledge of the loving sacrifice of Jesus Christ; that from this fact also arises an understanding of the meaning of personality, and therefore of the nature of society and of the true community; and lastly, that the barriers and fences that divide our human life, both on a national and on a world-scale, into warring sections, are in a deep sense untrue and unreal, for there is given to man by God in Christ a unity that is, in the fullest understanding of the word, universal.

Then we looked at some of the facts about this universal Church. We saw that during the last century and a half especially (though the expan-

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sion of the Church has gone on, with ups and downs, from the beginning), there has been a truly amazing growth of the Church literally all over the world, and that in our day it can be said with far greater truth than in any previous age of Christian history that there is a universal—an "œcumenical"—Church, spread through all the world and alive in every land.

We went on to consider that world-wide body at work. We found in its life a kind of paradox, in that it could never consent, except on pain of self-extinction, to be regarded as a static community among other communities; but possessed deep down in its inmost heart the knowledge that it must continually make known the secret by which it lived, and invite all mankind into the joy of it. We saw how that good news did, in fact, remake the hearts and the societies of men, and how the Church could claim through its insistence on a unique message to bring to mankind a strength and remaking not to be found elsewhere.

Lastly, we have just been considering the extraordinarily various ways in which this world-wide community serves the world. We have seen reason to believe that the Church both has a message about how men ought to live, in some measure worked out in detailed reference to the concrete problems of the time, and also offers the power by which society may be remade. But we saw that this must be wholly separated from any mere utopianism, for the end to which the world process moves lies in the hand of God and is not simply the result

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of our effort. Moreover, we remembered both the weakness and sin of the Churches (to this we shall have to return), and the fact that so many of the forces that sway modern society are not within the Church's power to control.

Of set purpose almost all the evidence that has been drawn upon has come from the Church overseas. This is for two reasons. In the first place we are far too little aware, when we talk and write about "the Church," of the majestic sweep of its life and the presence of miracle within it. It is not a mere piece of rhetoric to say that we are ourselves fellow-members of the same great Church with these men and women who have come into the Christian fold from cultures and allegiances so different from ours. When we read of the way in which after release from prison a Chinese pastor in Manchuria baptized over eighty persons, who must have known that they were not embracing an easy life, we ought to feel a sense of humble pride that we belong to a society that can display that kind of life. Kagawa, or Chiang Kai-shek and his wife, are for us fellow-members of the living Church. They are facing their problems and searching for the line of duty as Christians; they know the same joy in looking to the figure of Jesus and the same sense of being judged by Him that we do. These records of village communities being transformed, and caste asperities smoothed away, that come to us from India remind us that a believing Church should never treat the age of miracles as past; what

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have we to face in England that is harder than that achievement of Christians, both poor in resources and young in the Faith? To read of revival in the Congo may help us to see that the stories of the great revivals of religion in England need not be matters of past history.

But there is a second reason. It is possible to see some of our own problems more clearly if we look at them, or at their analogues, in the setting of a totally different world. The place of the Church in evangelism, for example, is a vital question for all real Christian growth. But if we look away from our own Churches, which are in one aspect of their life communities deeply merged in the common life and not easily brought to stand over against it, and see the power of a witnessing Church in a totally different environment, certain great matters of principle become clear. Or again, the meaning of education as a Christian instrument is plainer to see if we look at it in the surroundings of India, or of Africa. Or, to take a third instance, matters of Church and State are wholly different in the Islamic world, or under conditions of Japanese rule, from what they are in Britain or America, but the issues that dominate and the principles that alone can be followed by Christians are perhaps easier to see if we look at the matter in those unfamiliar surroundings.

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THE CASE AGAINST THE CHURCH

But now we return to our domestic perplexities. How does this idea and fact of a universal Church bear upon the search of men and women in our own country, and in the Western world, for the principle of community?

It is not possible for an honest Christian to go any further in this argument without trying to dispel the suspicion that he is wholly unmindful of the reasons why so many thoughtful persons do not take the Church seriously. These obstacles arise in part from the Church's own life and witness and in part from the inherent nature of the difficulties that our modern world has to face.

"How," it will be said, "can the Church pretend to offer any help on these matters when it is itself hopelessly divided? When a large part, possibly the majority, of its leaders and rank and file have been content with virtual inaction in the face of acknowledged social evils? Why get so angry about the communists when you have failed to get effectively angry about the things the communists—and you—know to be wrong? You are putting up a fight for the freedom and purity of the Church where it is being harried by the State, but what did the Church in those lands do to guide the young in a difficult post-war world, or to strengthen the spirit of the people? Even on such a plain issue—from our own Christian point of view—as racial discrimination you are inferior

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to the Mohammedans. Some of you get indignant about the colour bar in the Southern States of America or in South Africa, but you show that you would be just as bad yourselves, if not worse, by your total failure to do anything effective about the Jews in Europe, and by your admission of anti-semitism within the Church. Even if you can't do much about Jews why not do something for the Christians whose offence lies in their partly Jewish blood? That would seem an excellent opportunity to demonstrate the reality of a universal Church, transcending racial barriers, as you so love to say. No, sirs and madams, you do not form the Church Militant on earth, you belong to the Church Ruminant."

That is the first obstacle, that we are thought not to be sincere. We talk well, but we don't mean business. But there is another series of obstacles rather harder to overcome. They arise from the inherent nature of our modern problems. What can come out of Nazareth that can conceivably help us? We live in a world of immense complexity; we know that the Palestinian and the Græco-Roman worlds of nineteen hundred years ago were not simple, but they were in many essentials quite different from ours. We live in a world far more depersonalized than that older world. Technical organization has brought it about that men, whether employers or employed, are caught in the grip of huge combines and are the play of forces which they themselves only barely understand and certainly cannot control.

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This talk of the value of persons, can it be made real in our sort of world?

Again, it is said, the Church people seem to claim so much, and to make no room for the other forms of human association, and for all that rich part of life that cannot be called in the conventional and narrow sense "religious." "What about the trade-union, the professional association? If it comes to that, what about the nation? Is there no meaning in patriotism? If you want us to say 'dear City of God,' may we still not say 'dear city of Cecrops,' our ivy-crowned Athens that we love? Much of the richness of life seems to be outside what you care about. Music, the zest of hard games, art in all its forms, the creative passion that is as large a part of the make-up of great men of affairs as either the love of power or the love of money—all these things, which are good, at least we think they are, seem to have no place in your religious scheme, and we do not understand what your Divine society has got to say to us in our efforts to get a better human community."

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To a great deal of this one must just plead guilty. It is greatly exaggerated, and so far as the emphasis upon the failure of the Church to live up to its own standards is concerned, it is an unconscious tribute to those standards. There is not a little evidence to show that the churches, as they

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are, do to-day produce more of the men and women who shoulder the world's jobs of compassion and service than all other agencies put together. Conversations with such persons as hospital treasurers are illuminating on this point. But it is no bad thing to take blame to ourselves even if we believe we could make a case for partial exculpation. The important point for the members of the Church is this. It is a fatal thing to speak as if the actual churches to which Christians belong—the congregations and denominations—were in fact that One Holy Catholic Church, that bride of the Lord, that special instrument and vehicle of His Spirit, of which we have written and in which we believe. There is a well-known jibe that runs, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church and regret that it does not exist." It does exist, but it is also an object of faith. Within all these multitudinous Christian bodies, scattered all over the world and called by all the little names of our divisions, there is alive and operative the Church. These separate churches and communities may be looked at and judged as other human associations, for that is what in one aspect they are. They are therefore stained by the sins of humanity. Pride, cowardice, and sloth are among the major sins of established institutions, and the churches manifest them all.

But within them—and it may be beyond them, only God knows—there is the Body of Christ. Mr. Middleton Murry speaks of "the old and crucial distinction between the visible and in-

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visible Church” and of “the lamentable contradiction between any actual church and its idea, and between the very existence of separate Christian churches and the necessary idea of the universal Christian Church.” “The visible Church,” he goes on to say, “is torn between those who worship Satan under the name of God and those who try to have the religion of Jesus. But these are not the majority of Christians; which is the large company of those who are indifferent, or humbly waiting for guidance, or genuinely bewildered. Thus the visible Church is, as it always must be, a microcosm of the world; but it is, at the same time, something more than that. Its members are united by their common profession: that they see the revelation of absolute Good in Jesus Christ—in all that He did, and taught, and suffered, in all that has happened in the world after and because of that event. By that profession alone they are the Church.”¹

THE RELEVANCE OF THE CHURCH TO-DAY

The other type of objection and difficulty, based upon the apparent irrelevance of Christianity and the Church to the modern world and its specific problems, can be answered otherwise. In essentials the human problem is always the same, but it is true that the place occupied in human society by the Church as an actual institution is now very greatly different from what it used to

¹ *New Statesman*, February 5th, 1938.

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be in a rather less complicated and specialized world. Here we find the centre of a number of our difficulties. What is the Church to the average Christian? Is it not principally a fellowship for worship? He (and she) goes to Church once, it may even be twice, on Sunday, there to engage in an act of common worship, in prayer, in sacrament, in hearing the Word, in praise, in listening to preaching, in almsgiving. Let this be as good of its kind as it can be, there still is a question that raises its head. What does this fellowship in worship mean in relation to the affairs of daily life? Does it mean anything, or is it entirely apart from that life?

Here the "younger Churches" help us to see things more clearly. Something has been said of that rural Christianity that is growing up in India, China, Africa and many other lands. For the Indian villager, who becomes a Christian in one of these group accessions characteristic of the present time, the Church covers the greater part of life. It means to him not only worship together with his fellows, but the education of his children and the healing of his sicknesses. The co-operative banking and credit that is getting him out of the clutch of debt and the improvement of his poultry are all part of the Church's service. All these things flow from the worshipping centre, and if it were not for the preaching of the evangel to him and his fellows, nothing of all this would ever have happened. But the point is that the Church fellowship covers so much

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of life, and that the orbit of express Christian influence and activity is so large and wide.

It is, naturally, quite useless to talk as if those conditions could be restored in the industrialized countries of the West. Already even in these rural areas of the East there are approaching the same changes that have altered the face of the Western countries. The work of education is taken over by the State, with the Church, it may be, helping in a certain degree. Hospitals have long since been taken over by the whole community, whether on a State basis or on that of voluntary support. No one thinks of proposing Church hospitals in England. So we come to the position in which we now stand, where the life of the Church tends in fact to be limited to common worship and those social activities which are pleasant enough as expression of a certain degree of friendliness and may even play an important part in the succour of boy and girl life from the streets, but can hardly be presented as the full expression, in terms of modern life, of that mystical fellowship of which the common worship speaks so beautifully.

What should be that expression? What ought to be, for the Christianity of England or Scotland, of Germany or of America, the counterpart of the little co-operative credit society in which a group of Indian Christians will pledge their credit to one another in unlimited liability, thereby laying the foundation of a better way of living. The writer of this book does not know the answer to

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that question, but he is sure that a great deal depends upon the answer being found. It is not possible for the reality of the Church of Christ to be understood in the world if the actual fellowship of Christians issues, in terms of ordinary human association, in something far less real than a trade union or a professional association. Yet there must be a multitude of Christian congregations in which there are men of affairs who in their own hearts are troubled about the Christian way in commerce and business, but have never learned to look for help to other Christians within the fellowship of the Church. There is need to-day—and many feel that there is a great longing—for fresh experimental work along such lines. In some such ways the reality of Christian fellowship, nurtured by worship and ever drawing new draughts of life from the living Christ who indwells it, can be made living and relevant to the actual problems of our current life.

CHURCH AND NATION

Now let us turn to this important matter of the relation of the Church to other human institutions around which the life of man is gathered in fellowship. Chief among these is the nation or people, that which Germans call, in a word not wholly translatable into English, the *Volk*. How does the Church bear upon the loyalty that men owe to their country?

There are quite certainly two related though

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contrasted views which Christians should hold about the nation. It is both God-given and tainted, like other human things, by sin.

“The Christian is called to accept and rejoice in the fact that God has chosen to set men in various races, peoples and nations, with different manners and styles of life. That each nation seems to have its distinctive contribution and mission to the world is to be ascribed to God’s purpose. The ties of common blood, soil, tradition, culture and purpose which constitute the national community are by nature enormously strong. They are given of God, who creates the individual life in and through the life of a specific community. On the other hand it must be said with the greatest emphasis that, as with every divine gift, the gift of nation has been and is being abused by men and made to serve sin. Any form of national egotism whereby the love of one’s own people leads to the suppression of other nationalities and minorities, or to failure to respect and appreciate the gifts of other peoples, is sin and rebellion against God, who is the Creator and Lord of all peoples. The history of every nation is defaced by national crimes; every nation has its distinctive national defects as well as its distinctive excellences. More fundamental still, even the best things in national life have in them an element of sinful self-assertion and self-glorification, of indifference and contempt for ‘the lesser breeds without the law,’ and of the will to lord it over them. Everywhere in the life of nations and

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peoples these two elements have been, and are, at work; it is not possible to disentangle them and to say with confidence, 'This is the work of God' and 'This is the work of the Devil.' But, to see in one's own nation the source and standard of revelation, or in any other way to give the nation divine status, is utterly sinful."¹

This is a balanced and a highly authoritative statement, and it is hard to conceive that any Christian mind could challenge it. In practice, the position of the Christian Churches in the West differs somewhat from that of the "younger Churches" in this matter. In a good deal of the West the danger that is most obvious is that love of country should pass into idolatry and the Church and the very Gospel be used to buttress that idolatry. But in a great deal of the East, just because the Churches have owed their foundation mainly to the work of foreigners, there is a tendency to be somewhat un-national, and the charge can with some plausibility be made that the Christian Church is an aspect of foreign cultural penetration. Therefore when we find, as in fact we do, a very powerful nationalist feeling among the leaders of the Eastern Churches, we have to remember that they have, as it were, some leeway to make up.

But it may be said, more fundamentally, that it is not merely a matter of convenience and policy that the Church should honour the nation and should develop its own life so that it speaks to the

¹ *The Churches Survey Their Task*, pp. 226-7.

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nation truly in its own language; it is a matter of principle. As the statement just quoted says, if nation and race and cultural history are a part of the creation and gift of God, for the Church's life to be apart from these things would be to have no real life at all.

Yet the other side remains not less true and important. For us of the West it is, possibly, at the moment the more important of the twin aspects. There is, as we have seen, in our world this tendency to erect different parts of the human heritage into absolutes and to bow down and worship them. Nothing in the world is so tempting an object to put into the empty niche that belonged once to Another, as the nation, to which every man owes so much. The moment we do so, what was wholly good becomes evil. The whole-hearted love for his nation and the glad obedience to its commands that a Christian man can give, yielding them as a part of his duty to God by which they are corrected and governed, become a humourless intolerance of others and a gross exaggeration of self when they are divorced from that control.

Now it is precisely that insistence on the supreme obedience that is due to God alone that constitutes the value of the Church in our society. Let us hear once more Mr. Middleton Murry.

"The function of the Church is to keep alive within any human society the sense of the reality of Good and Evil as absolutes, independent of the convention of society or the ordinances of the

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secular State. That function can be fulfilled only by a Church. . . . And if the postulate that there is an absolute Good and Evil is true, the function can be completely fulfilled only by the universal Church. . . . Religion absolutely depends on the acknowledgment of the reality of an absolute Good. Take away that foundation and Christianity collapses. But, take away that foundation, and the civilized world collapses too. Ours is, though it has forgotten it, a Christian civilization. For without Christianity there is no accepted criterion outside society by which society can be judged; and Man hands himself over, gagged and bound, and without appeal, to the absolute authority of the secular State. . . . But there is the individual conscience. There is, indeed. But what is the individual conscience, unless it be the voice of God. Or why should we obey it? And, above all, whence shall we derive the strength to obey it? ”¹

THE CHURCH AND ECONOMIC DIVISION

Let us turn now to a different kind of issue. National loyalty presents not a danger to the spirit of community within a people, but an attempt—when it is exaggerated and freed from proper control—to achieve that community at the expense of all else. But when we turn to the economic sphere we touch the source of much of the disunity among men to-day. It is not only that men differ; in Britain at least we have had representative demo-

¹ *loc. cit.*

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cracy for a long time, with acute differences between parties, and the national unity has been virtually untroubled. But one reason for that was that both Tory and Whig, both Conservative and Liberal, left unchallenged the economic basis of society. Now there has come about a change of the highest importance. One party in the State, with a fervour varying in degree, as is natural, throughout its ranks, desires to see that established economic order changed into another, whose blue-prints it is ready to show. So far the crisis has been postponed, because the party of change has not had a majority free from dependence upon others who on this point did not agree with it. But suppose that this were altered and there were a majority pledged to introduce a Socialist *régime* in the British Isles. You cannot, as it has been elegantly put, "unscramble the eggs, once they have been scrambled." It is quite unthinkable that a great country can change over every five years from the capitalist to the socialist *régime*. Because this is so, and those who disliked the change could not wait in hope for five years for the swing of the pendulum, but must necessarily realize the finality of what was done—would it be peaceably accepted? Britain is a country deeply habituated to obey the law even when it hurts, but can we be quite sure that those who have vast interests to lose would accept a radical change in the economic order at the dictates of a parliamentary majority? It is enough, perhaps, to suggest the question.

The other way out is to keep the party of radical

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change in permanent opposition. The only thing that can be said to that is that it would lead with complete certainty to violence.

It is therefore a matter of far greater moment than many people seem to realize, that this deep and powerful menace to national community should be faced and met. How can it be met? The recent history of Europe is certainly not encouraging on the point. It is easy to relapse into the despairing view that only a violent struggle can be expected, and to get ready for it. But that is to concede the communist view in advance.

At this point it appears that certain elementary Christian truths need to be asserted. This world is not a puzzle with no solution, made to amuse himself eternally by a celestial cross-word fiend, but a world made by a good God and found by Him to be good. That original stamp it has not lost. It has been disfigured by the sinfulness of men, but it is still God's world. There is, therefore, a way out, or better, a way forward. We must beware of the tendency of our time to take refuge in tragic extremes. An economist from one of the South African colleges assured the present writer that it was really a myth and an illusion to say that the economic interests of the white and the black were at war; they were bound up inevitably together. Yet white South Africa seems to act on the basis of the illusion. So in this matter of the economic organization of society it is necessary to believe that there is a way that can be found.

But it will never be possible for sweet reasonable-

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ness to achieve the task, because men must not only agree, but agree to give things up. It is surely here that the service of the Church becomes plain. There are within the ranks of the Church employer and employed, very rich and very poor, dyed-in-the-wool *laissez-faire* individualist and doctrinaire socialist, landlord and tenant, farmer and artisan, with a very considerable number of those men and women whose minds have been versed and trained in the study of the economic order. But they have in addition to these separating attributes one thing in common. They all profess faith in God through Jesus Christ.

Surely it is not just wishful thinking and evasion of reality if we urge that from within its own fellowship there should be a possibility of the Church bringing forth understanding and reconciliation. It is at such junctures that one wakes up to realize how pernicious is the clericalization of our thought of the "Church." The Church's efforts in this field ought not to be primarily those of the clergy. They ought not to be primarily displayed in the passing of somewhat general resolutions in assemblies. They ought to be the efforts of Christian men and women who are deeply immersed in the work of the world, who know the technique of industrial, commercial and financial life, whose "shop" it is, as it is not and cannot be that of the clergy.

The plea made so powerfully at the Oxford Conference by Dr. Oldham for the development of new types of ministries is in point here. It is to

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put it much too low merely to say that this kind of corporate experimentation is necessary if the Church as an institution is to survive. It is more to the point to urge that the Church in its fellowship and in virtue of the spirit that informs it has something to give for lack of which the world order is perishing. It is therefore a matter of literally vital importance that it should act.

THE CHURCH'S SUPREME DUTY

Other issues in the same field, such as those of race and international reconciliation, we shall discuss in the following chapter. But there is one consideration of the first moment that we have not yet faced.

There is a pregnant phrase in one of the Oxford reports. "To-day convinced Christians are everywhere in a minority in a predominantly non-Christian world. For the relation of the Church to the community the mission field is now normative. *The relation of the Church in China to Chinese life is more typical than the relation of the Church in Britain to British life; indeed the inner reality in Britain may be more like that in China than is commonly suspected.*"¹

If this is at all true, and "the mission field is normative," there is to be learned from the younger Churches and the whole missionary movement one great truth. It is the prime duty of evangelism. We have said already that it is a pure illusion to

¹ *The Churches Survey Their Task*, p. 200. (Italics ours.)

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imagine that the Christian Church and the Christian religion can be of any use to the world merely as agencies employed to produce certain social effects and strengthen certain tendencies, apart from the claims which inherently and inescapably they must make.

“Let the Church be the Church,” was the slogan at the Oxford meeting. Its first duty is to show forth its own characteristic kind of life: to be itself, a fellowship within humanity but drawing its life from God. But if it is to be the Church, it has within its bosom this knowledge of forgiveness. That is what made it and called it into being. It is the only human society of which it may be said that its only qualification for membership is that no one is good enough. This miracle of forgiveness, of the new start, of God calling sons those who had strayed far from Him—all this is what it lives by, and even in the slackest, deadest, most materialistic of Christian congregations, there are those who know this precious mystery.

The Church has not done all that it may and can for human community within our national life when it has brought the spirit of reconciliation into economic life, and wedded it to technical knowledge and equipment. It has still a greater thing to give. The Christian dealing with caste and outcaste in India has not been by urging casteman and outcaste to love one another and get on better. It has been by telling both alike of a forgiving love in which they are remade. The Church can serve the community best by bringing to it that message.

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It is a message of judgment, a call to repentance. It will not be popular; the Church could only sound the call by purging itself, and its increased enthusiasm would be accompanied by a greater unpopularity. But there are no other terms on which action is possible. Again we come to the essential paradox of the Church's relation to the world. Itself stamped with all the marks of one of the multitudinous groupings into which mankind is divided, it yet can only bring to divided mankind the message of community by first saying "Repent." It can only help to heal the open wounds of human society by denying man's ability to heal himself, and by pointing away from man to Man's Creator and Redeemer.

CHAPTER VII

THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH AND THE WORLD OF NATIONS

At a time when men's hopes of international amity have sunk to the lowest ebb, what has the Church to say about the nature and possibility of world community?

Let us begin by recalling two points made at an earlier stage in our argument. At the very beginning we urged that the advance of science, and all that wonderful progress in the mastery of nature of which our modern world does well to be proud, point to the reasonableness, the possibility and, indeed, to the necessity of world community. This should never be forgotten; to anyone who believes in the ultimate unity of all truth it is highly significant. But the other point is contained in the last of the assertions which were made about the root principles of the Church itself: the Church is in its very nature universal.

INTERNATIONAL OR UNIVERSAL?

It is time now to develop this idea rather more fully. We have drawn a distinction between "international" and "universal" (or "ecumeni-

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cal"). It is not a mere piece of pedantry. An institution such as the League of Nations is properly and exactly described as international. It is made up of members, each of which is a sovereign State, and the sovereignty of each of its members remains unimpaired except in so far as they may expressly surrender some part of it. (If, for example, a State signs the "optional clause" in adhering to the International Court of Justice at the Hague, it has to a definite extent surrendered its independent sovereignty: that, it may be said, is one reason for the great importance attached in League circles to the optional clause.) Beginning with such a conception, men will strive for the adoption of measures of unity and concord into which all the separate sovereign States may enter. Such an understanding and such unity would be "international." It takes its start from the given fact of the separate nations; out of these separate and individual units it builds that which is "international."

But, as we have already pointed out, this is not the standpoint from which the Christian Church can or ought to approach the question. The Church does, indeed, approach the question from the point of view of a given fact, but that given fact is not the nation, it is the Christian redemption. The development of the universal Church has not been, as a matter of historic fact, through a series of national Churches seeking to enter into fellowship. There has spread throughout the world a single fellowship, beginning with the Lord's own disciples, and breaking into sections

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differing in doctrinal emphasis and other things, though never wholly losing the primal unity. What unites Christians is not a common aspiration or objective which they, as separate national or racial groups, have conceived and desire to achieve, but an act of God in Christ to which they owe the fact that they are Christians. "The unity of this fellowship is not built up from its constituent parts, like a federation of different states. It consists in the Sovereignty and redeeming acts of its one Lord. The source of unity is not the consenting movement of men's wills; it is Jesus Christ whose one life flows through the Body and subdues the many wills to His."¹

This is the standpoint from which Christians must approach the subject of international order. It is a unique standpoint. It belongs vitally to that character of the Church as both divine and human which, as we have seen, is both the very life of the Church and the source of some at least of the enmity which the Church arouses. But it is wholly essential for Christians to recognize that they do not approach the problem of human world relations in the same way as secular statesmen who seek to build up international order; they begin with a fact.

RACIALISM

From this standpoint, then, let us consider one or two of the difficulties. First let us take the problem of Racialism.

¹ *The Churches Survey Their Task*, p. 58.

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There are not many world issues that challenge the Christian as does that of Racialism. It is not merely a characteristic modern source of idolatry. It is an evil to which the Church has itself to some extent yielded. How easy to speak with dignified sorrow of the exaggerations of race-loyalty in Europe to-day, of the ways in which racial purity, from a given standpoint, almost seems to guarantee sinlessness; but how difficult to live up to the Christian view of race! How easy to be superior to those who in South Africa, or in the southern states of America, erect the colour-bar, but how difficult to remember that the evil of anti-semitism, which is an aspect of the evil of racialism, has invaded the Church and not been cast out!

It is not within the compass of this book to give an account of what race is. Probably there is still room for a great deal of objective scientific study of the physical bases of race. That there are certain physical differences between the races no one can deny; the extent to which they are accompanied by moral and intellectual characteristics seems highly disputable. But it is not necessary to understand these matters fully to be able to take a Christian view and act upon it. When the New Testament says that there "is neither Jew nor Greek," it obviously does not mean that there is no difference between Jew and Greek, any more than in the same context it asserts that there are no differences between men and women. It means that they are equally the objects of the love of God.

"Oh, but you mean that you approve of racial

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inter-marriage." Crowds of people, Christians included, are prevented from going any further into the matter by this initial bogey. Of this, it is not necessary to say more than two things here. The first is that a large proportion of the mixed marriages that turn out badly are marriages of people so unsuited to one another by reason of cultural, religious or other differences, that if they were of the same "race" they would almost certainly make a mess of it. The reason for this lies in the atmosphere of evasion and hypocrisy that surrounds a great deal of inter-racial intercourse, resulting in hasty and ill-considered alliances. The other thing to be said is that those who imagine they can handle the problem of inter-racial marriage by a policy of tactful silence are mistaken. The conditions of the world are such as to make increased inter-racial and international contact certain. There is no other way but that of openness and fair facing of the facts. The kind of objections to inter-racial marriage in which there is substance can and ought to be stated, discussed and understood. Christian love is not the enemy of honesty. But it is also essential that judgment of facts shall be Christian judgment and not a concession to concealed prejudice. The present writer would only add that he has himself been privileged to know cases of inter-racial marriage to which he cannot conceive a *Christian* objection being taken.

It may seem a strange thing to say, but this is not the main aspect of the question for the Christian as a Christian. There are two others more

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important. The first is that if a "race" (the word must necessarily be used rather loosely) is oppressed, backward, denied by circumstances or the hardness of men's hearts the ordinary human privileges, it ought in the Christian view to be the object of special solicitude. Suppose it had been proved that the African is inferior in mental and moral qualities to the European. (One does not add, even in supposition, physical qualities, in view of the results of the Berlin Olympic Games!) What then? What is built upon this foundation of congenital difference? Is it the policy of economic exploitation, withholding of education, refusal of the justice that others enjoy? Or is it a special effort to aid him in the development of what he has of natural endowment? The former has on the whole been, to its shame, the attitude of the white race towards the African. The latter ought unquestionably to be the line taken by the Church.

The second question is that of the existence of racialism within the Church itself. We do not join here in the indiscriminate abuse of the Church's record which is fashionable in certain quarters. Not all, but a goodly number of the people who are struggling against this evil of racialism in the countries where it is most evident are Christians. We have referred to South Africa. The recently published report of the Native Affairs Commission of the Union Government contains some acid attacks upon the mission schools. The real gravamen of the attack is that these schools are not based upon the Native policy of the country.

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Much is said, with a certain plausibility, of "the effective organization of the Native's experiences so that his tendencies and powers may develop in a manner satisfactory to himself and the community" and "the inspanning of those inherent qualities of brotherhood for the general advance of the people."¹ But the point is quite clear. It is that the mission schools offer an education out of tune with the general Native policy of the country, a policy of which the colour-bar is an essential expression, and therefore the work of education must be taken away from the mission schools. This matter must and will be fought out by South Africans. We mention it as a proof, taken from a country where Muslim propaganda openly accuses the Church of racialism, that there is something fundamentally antipathetic to racialism in the teaching of Christianity.

Yet it cannot be pretended that the witness of the organized Church, taken as a whole, has been satisfactory by Christian standards. As this book will be read, if at all, mainly by people in Britain, let us not dwell upon the failures of Christians in South Africa and the Southern States. Let us consider our own form of racialism, which is anti-semitism. It is not pretended that there is in our own country an anti-semitic feeling such as has defiled the fair name of certain European countries. It is still possible for a Jew to be a Cabinet Minister. But one is driven to the reluctant conclusion that there is in us more of

¹ *Report of Native Affairs Commission*, par. 58.

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the evil of racialism than one would wish to admit, by the singular fact of the failure of the Churches in Britain to succour in any adequate way the Christians of Jewish race on whom the harrow of persecution in Central Europe has pressed hard.

One of the most distinguished of living English Jews writes as follows: "Jews are completely astounded by the action, or rather want of action, of the Christian Churches towards those victims of 'racial' persecution who, while of Jewish origin, adhere to the Christian faith. Hardly any help at all has been forthcoming on their behalf from Christian sources, and the overwhelming proportion of their relief—both spiritual and material—has been left to the benevolence of the terribly overburdened Jewish charities. When Jews find themselves compelled to support their Christian brethren, victims of persecutions by those who are still nominally Christian, it is clear that not only can they not regard the professions of Christianity with favour, they cannot regard them even with seriousness."¹

Hard words, but are they too hard? Some more has been done than when Dr. Singer wrote, but not much. In Britain and America alike the plight of the "non-Aryan Christian"—to use the clumsy technicality—remains something that does not move the ordinary Christian. The facts have been stated over and over again; is it that we do in fact erect a racial barrier? We should admire

¹ Dr. Charles Singer.

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the Jew for his indomitable courage and his fidelity to his people under every kind of woe and hardship. But we ourselves boast that we have a gospel that transcends the barriers of race. We shall never again in our time enjoy so great a chance of showing that we believe it.

INTERNATIONAL PEACE

Let us now turn from this question of Racism, burning as it is, and look at other aspects of the world community and the denials of it. What can the Church do to promote international peace? It is difficult even to think of this question without rushing to the critical issue—should Christians fight? But it is absolutely necessary to look more widely and to try to see the duty and significance of a universal society such as the Christian Church in the midst of a world like ours. What is international law? It is the acceptance by different nations of compacts that bind them all. In the individual State there is the union of law and force, and the more complete the social development of the State the more complete that union is. But between States there is no such union of law and force; the law of the jungle is still with us, far more intimately with us than even eighteen months ago most of us would have thought. How can law and force be united as between nations? Only as they have been united within the individual State. There must grow up a sufficient body of people among the

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different nations, desiring to understand one another and to keep the common law, to make the existence of that common law effectively possible. Everything that unites the peoples and creates a common *ethos* among them aids in the formation of a genuine international order. The foundations are being laid for international law. Surely it is plain that a Church which extends across the boundaries of the nations has a great part to play, if only it can realize itself. It is not even necessary for it to act as sponsor to any particular scheme or type of international organization; to be truly itself and live its own life in unison among the nations is to serve the end of international law.

Moreover, the existence of a universal society based on the Christian revelation must serve the end of international peace in other ways. Can the State be regarded as the subject of moral duties? Ought we to speak of a country "keeping its promises"? It is said "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." But what are Cæsar's and what are God's? Is it Cæsar who settles what is due to God? Or is it from God that Cæsar derives his right? For the Christian only the latter view seems to be possible. The power of Cæsar is not a non-moral thing, based only on blind violence; his power is given him by God. It is therefore normally right for Christians to obey the State, because they believe that they are thus discharging a part of their duty to God.

The existence of a Christian society in the world

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ought, therefore, to strengthen the demand that is made on the State that it should obey moral imperatives, and to weaken the pressure in favour of a universe of power-politics. In particular, its influence must be thrown always against the idea of the absolute State, which is only another way of saying the immoral State. Either we believe that there is a morality superior to the State, by which the actions of the State are judged, or we believe that the State is absolute and that what it commands us to do is, because it commands it, right. But if there is to be any movement towards a better international order it must be based upon the recognition of a right which lies beyond the separate wills of States. The existence of a universal Christian society cannot fail to be a source of strength to the movement for the recognition of the moral duty of the State, even though it may be admitted that the trustee responsibility of the corporate State does to some extent differentiate it from the individual. "Unless we are prepared to cut our life into two utterly separate halves we must admit that it is our duty to do all that in us lies to bring Cæsar—the traditions and practices of government—to the recognition of his duty to God."¹

How far can the Christian society, so far as it is able and willing to act together, go along the road of definite policies in the sphere of international relationships? Probably not very far. At least it is wrong to invest a judgment in the

¹ *The Churches Survey Their Task*, p. 173.

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relative sphere of political expediency with the absolute value that attaches to religious duty. In this connection it may fairly be said that while it was right to muster Christian feeling behind the ideal and the fact of the League of Nations, it was wrong for so many to treat the League idea and the League itself as if in them the Kingdom of God had come. "No international order which can be devised by human effort may be equated with the Kingdom of God. . . . On the other hand the attitude of Christians towards specific proposals in the political sphere should be governed by their obedience to the living God and their understanding of His purpose in Christ."¹

Christians, like other people, have to choose, when the ways part and one way has to be taken. It is one thing to refrain from urging a political course as a part of essential discipleship; it is another to make that an excuse for a cowardly withdrawal from the stress of choice in actual life. There are some lines along which we may with justice claim that Christian thought and action within the wider Church should move.

It is pathetically easy to see now that if the problem of effecting peacefully the changes in the international order which justice and developing circumstances demand had been more boldly tackled in the post-war years, Europe would not be hag-ridden by the fear of aerial bombardment as she is to-day. There is force in certain of the

¹ Op. cit., p. 171.

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scornful attacks made by official German pens upon the Oxford conference, and its statements about the evils of an unbridled nationalism and racialism. They say, in brief, that those who mercilessly lash the excesses of nationalism had nothing to say about the throttling of Germany, the Versailles treaty and its injustices, the taking away of the German colonies and the other measures which German opinion of all shades has regarded as unjust. But when, they say, the national soul reasserts itself in opposition to these injustices, it meets with nothing but misunderstanding and abuse. There is some truth in this, and Christians must take their full share of the blame. There have been voices within the œcumenical Christian movement pleading for a juster view than that of Versailles, but they have not been numerous or strong enough to carry the Churches.

The task is not yet hopeless. Indeed, it is never hopeless, for even the dread arbitrament of war, as the last twenty years have shown, solves no problems. It is not possible to defeat Justice in the end. Probably the Churches have needed, and ought to have provided themselves with, a better service of facts. The time to press for peaceful change is before it is supplanted by warlike change, while opinion is still complacent and likely to be annoyed by the suggestion that anything should be done. Then is the time for the Church, out of its wide range of life and experience, to bring facts to bear, to supplement the

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(often) one-sided information available to the public through the ordinary channels, and to remind the public mind of justice, even when it is still relatively safe to be unjust. But it is never too late. Take Japan. Whatever the outcome of the present war in the Far East, it is and will be necessary for the rest of the world to face the economic necessities of Japan. The studies have to be made, both of the needs of Japan and also of the actual effects upon the importing countries, many of them populated by the very poor consumer, of the Japanese type of cheap import. The existence of a Church throughout all the lands concerned should surely make such studies easier.

There is one especial respect in which Christian teaching might now be of great value. It is scarcely to be doubted that one condition of a stable world order is that there should be some surrender of absolute national sovereignty. Some, like the Marquess of Lothian in his Burge lecture,¹ and others of the *Round Table* group, definitely envisage the idea of a world-State, and hold that a council of sovereign States leaves untouched the central problem of unchecked national sovereignty. Others who would not go the full length of that are prepared to admit that the claim of each national State to be judge in its own cause is a potent cause of international disorder, and that "the abandonment of that claim, and the abrogation of absolute national sovereignty, is a duty that

¹ *Pacifism is not Enough, nor Patriotism either.*

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the Church should urge upon the nations.”¹ If the Churches have done much to popularize the idea of the League of Nations ever since its formation, ought they not to be preparing the minds of their members for this further and more necessary, though very difficult, advance, and to teach that one absolute condition of a better international world order is that separate nations should be willing to make some surrender of their individual sovereignty?

But if all expedients fail, if peaceful change cannot be accomplished, or if there are loose in the world influences that make war unavoidable, what does the Church say then?

Canon Raven has recently devoted a whole book² to the answer, and what he has so fully done need not be repeated here. But he is right in his insistence that the behaviour of the Churches in the face of the fact of war is crucial for their existence.

The Oxford conference performed a valuable service in making clear the undoubted fact that on the question of taking part in war Christians do not agree, and in defining the main divisions of opinion. There can be no doubt whatever that in this country, to mention no others, if a war—any kind of war—broke out, there would be division within the Churches. There would be those who on principle regard all war as so contrary to the meaning of Christian discipleship that

¹ *The Churches Survey Their Task*, p. 173.

² *War and the Christian*.

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they would refuse any combatant duty. There would be those who would fight as a Christian duty if they were assured of the justice of the war. There would be those who, either because they believe that war is simply one manifestation of the evil of the world, or because they feel it impossible to separate themselves from their country, would take up arms at their country's command under virtually any conditions.

But this is only the story within a single country. The Church universal extends across the nations, and the rent in the body of humanity caused by every war is necessarily also a rent in the body of the Church. Christians will be fighting against one another in the future as they have done in the past.

Is this the end of the story? In the face of division, both national and international, so deep and so serious, is it any more use talking about the universal Church? Or is it, perhaps, just here, in the deep reality of divided human judgment on a vital issue, that the significance of the Church becomes clear?

We take the latter view. Consider, first, the fact of divided conviction among British Christians about the rightness of participation in war. It would be indeed the end of the Church as a serious institution if it were content simply to register opposition and leave the matter there. But let us hear what the very representative Christians who met at Oxford had to say.

"We do not affirm that any one of these

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positions can be held to represent the only Christian attitude. The Church must insist that the perplexity itself is a sign of the sin in which its members are implicated. It cannot rest in permanent acquiescence in the continuance of these differences, but should do all that is possible to promote the study of the problem by people of different views meeting together to learn from one another as they seek to understand the purpose of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. Recognizing that its members are also called to live within the secular State or nation, and that in the event of war a conflict of duties is inevitable, it should help them to discover God's will, should then honour their conscientious decisions, whether they are led to participate in, or to abstain from, war and maintain with both alike the full fellowship of the body of Christ."¹

As for the universal Church in time of war, it should have one distinctive duty, and that is given to it by its Master in direct and inescapable terms. It is prayer, prayer which, for all Christians who are citizens of States at war, includes prayer for our enemies. "In time of war, as in time of peace, the Church should pray not only for the nation in which God has placed it, but also for the enemies of that nation. If Christians in warring nations pray according to the pattern of prayer given by their Lord, they will not be 'praying against' one another. The Church should witness in word, in sacramental life, and in action

¹ *The Churches Survey Their Task*, pp. 181-2.

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to the reality of the kingdom of God which transcends the world of nations. It should proclaim and obey the commandment of the Lord, 'Love your enemies.'"¹

It is, alas, far easier to say or write this than to do it. It may be safely predicted that any clergyman who, in time of war, leads the prayers of his people after this manner will encounter much and bitter criticism from people who are earnest Christians. But is there any escape from the conclusion that such prayer is alone expressive of the true attitude of the living Church to the world and to her Lord? We have quoted already² the inspiring example of the Christians of Japan and China who, differing wholly on the merits of the conflict, are yet resolved to keep the bond of love. The Japanese Christians have in public prints laid emphasis upon the service they seek to render in relief to Chinese in the occupied areas. One does not wish to exaggerate these things, but they afford encouragement to those who long to behold tokens of the supernatural life of a universal Church in the world of men.

REALIZING THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

This duty of the universal Church to hold to the unity of its life in time of war is, however, only a special (and a specially difficult) case of its continuing function. The developments of

¹ *The Churches Survey Their Task*, p. 183.

² See page 66.

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recent years have shown how much can be done to increase the knowledge that Christians may have of one another. The German Church struggle has done more to educate Christians in Britain about the existence of a universal Church than anything that has happened for a generation. The labours of such organizations as the World Alliance For Promoting Friendship through the Churches have done much to increase knowledge. More Christians by travel and conference have made themselves acquainted with Christians of other lands; even one single friend makes so much difference. There are regular and organized means for giving help to the weaker and threatened Churches; what is done is not enough, but it grows steadily and so does the recognition of a common responsibility for one another among Christians. It is worth adding that probably there is a larger degree and extent of personal knowledge of one another on the part of leading men and women in the Church as a whole (alas, still with the exception of the Roman communion, which by its own act stands outside all this growing life) than at any previous time in the Church's history.

At the end of the present year there will meet, God willing, in Madras another great gathering of Christians. Like the meetings held at Oxford and Edinburgh it will embrace practically all the parts of the Church outside Rome. Unlike them, its membership will comprise at least as many delegates from the "younger Churches" of Asia,

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Africa and Latin America as from the Churches of the West. There will be present Japanese, Koreans and Chinese; Indians and British; Filipinos and Americans; French and Germans; Negroes and Afrikanders; most of the great tensions of humanity will be represented in the unity of the meeting—if God gives it unity. The International Missionary Council which will gather these four hundred and fifty people to Madras is one of the several instruments raised up in these latter years to give body and expression to the idea of the universal Church. Itself claiming no ecclesiastical function, and disowning any authority except such as knowledge and width of experience may confer upon its membership, it brings into the search for world community, on behalf of the whole Church, two priceless gifts. In the first place, it insists always that the world is not Europe and America, neither the secular nor the Christian world. By its action on this occasion, when actually a full half of the delegates will be drawn from the non-white races, it will dramatically assert the full oecumenical quality of the Church of Christ. In the second place it stands, perhaps more definitely and positively by reason of its constitution and special function than any other Christian world organization, for the primary duty of preaching the word of God. It has been asserted again and again in this book that there can be no contribution of the Christian Church to world community except on terms compatible with the Christian Gospel.

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These small and weak communities of Christians, set in the midst of vast and ancient societies that do not acknowledge, nor most of them even know, the name of Christ, remind the whole Church of its eternal duty. They recall us of the older Christian tradition to our vast unfinished task. They know for themselves and they declare to us that the casting down of the middle wall of partition, not only in the Jewish Temple of old, but in the hearts of men all over the world, has been done in the Cross of Christ. It is for men to believe and follow.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DUTY OF THE CHURCHMAN

WE have taken into our thought during these few chapters the principles upon which the Church is built, and we have tried to understand both the relevance of the Church to the need of which the world shows itself to be conscious, and the kind of ministry which the Church can, and in some measure actually does, render. But the whole argument leads to nothing unless it is made plain that to every humble and serious Christian these great considerations mean personal choice and decision. If our contentions have any truth in them, members of the Church of Christ are not confronted merely with a series of great tasks to which they may set their hands if they think it worth while, but with the action of God Himself. It has been urged throughout that the Church, with all the weaknesses that are so plain in its human nature, is none the less the Body of Christ. It is therefore the place wherein the distinctive action of the redeeming God is to be discerned. God is at work in the world; it is His hand that casts down and builds up and overrules so that

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even the wrath of man is made to praise Him. If men everywhere are right in feeling that we live at the end of an age, when the foundations of customary society are being dissolved, Christians must believe that it is a Day of the Lord. The question of questions for the members of the Church is then not "Shall we try to undertake this huge task," but "What doth the Lord say unto us?"

REPENTANCE

At the risk of vain repetition, we must repeat what has more than once been said of the need for Christians to face, as the first duty that is laid upon them, the call to repent. This is, indeed, inherent in what we have said of the Church and the Churches, the divine-human nature of the Church, and its unique character as combining a divine mission with the frailties of a human institution. It is a much easier thing to be aware of the world's need of repentance than to realize that we ourselves who are Christians and belong to the Church need also to repent.

Let us be more specific. There are sins which are not merely due to the sharing of the Church in humanity, but are peculiar to Christians. Here is the tragic voice of Professor Reinhold Niebuhr:¹

"It is quite obvious that no Christian Church has a right to preach to a so-called secular age without

¹ In a speech at the Oxford Conference.

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a contrite recognition of the shortcomings of historic Christianity, which tempted the modern age to disavow its Christian faith. Secularism . . . may be a reaction to profanity. Some men are atheists because of a higher implicit theism than that professed by believers.

“A profane Christianity ostensibly maintains its sense of dependence upon the Father, but it uses this relationship to satisfy a sinful egotism. It falsely identifies its relative and partial human insights with God’s wisdom, and its partial and relative human achievements with God’s justice. A profane Christianity falsely identifies the Church with the Kingdom of God. . . . No historic Christian institution is free of this sin. Every vehicle of God’s grace, the preacher of the Word, the prince of the Church, the teacher of theology, the historic institution, the written word, the sacred canon, all these are in danger of being revered as if they were themselves divine.

“Every human civilization is a compromise between the necessities and contingencies of nature and the Kingdom of God, with its absolute love commandment. This is as true of a Christian as of an unchristian civilization. In a Christian, as well as in an unchristian civilization, the strong are tempted to exploit the weak, the community is tempted to regard itself as an end in itself, and the rulers to use their power for their own advantage. When the welter of relative justice and injustice, which emerges out of this conflict and confluence of forces, is falsely covered with the *aura* of the

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divine, and when the preservation of such a community is falsely enjoined as a Christian duty, and when its rebels and enemies are falsely regarded as enemies of God, it is only natural that those who are most conscious of the injustices of a given social order, because they suffer from them, should adopt an attitude of cynical secularism towards the pretensions of sanctity made on behalf of civilization. A profanation of the holiness of God leads inevitably to an effort to eliminate the sacred from human life.

“ If we preach repentance it must be repentance for those who accept the Lord as well as for those who pretend to deny Him. If we preach the judgment of God upon a sinful world, it must be judgment upon us as well as upon those who do not acknowledge His judgments. If we preach the mercy of God, it must be with a humble recognition that we are in need of it as much as those who do not know God’s mercy in Christ.

“ It is wholesome for the Church to stand under the stinging rebuke, ‘ God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham,’ a rebuke in the form of a statement of fact which history has validated again and again. If the conscience of the Church feels the relevance to its own life of that rebuke, it can preach the Gospel of a holy God, holy in righteousness and mercy, without making sinful claims for itself in the name of that holiness: and it will be able to speak to the conscience of this generation, rebuking its sins without assuming a role of self-righteousness and overcom-

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ing its despair without finding satisfaction in the sad disillusionment into which the high hopes of modernity have issued."

The need for repentance is not because without it we shall not be taken seriously. It is because without it there is no access to the power of God. Perhaps it is hardly necessary to emphasize nowadays the danger of a self-righteous pietism, that behaves as if, being itself saved, it had no need for repentance. It is after his conversion, not before, that St. Paul says that of sinners "*I am chief.*" The danger to-day with the average Christian is a too easy compromise with worldly standards, and a facile acceptance of the half-secularized church-life as a true obedience to the call of God. We have little realization of what membership in the universal Church should mean, and because we are far more conscious of our membership in the world grouping—family, race or nation—to which we belong, we imperceptibly fall into a contented acceptance of its standards.

To be repentant is to be intensely aware of the living and holy God. "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man," said Peter, caught in an ecstasy of awareness of what his Master was. But the Lord did not depart from Peter, neither will He depart from us.

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THE NATURE OF CHRISTIAN EFFORT AND HOPE

But what is it that we ought to hope for, and in what spirit of expectation ought we to work, as Christians and as members of the Church? Here is a question of the very first importance. The diversity of judgment in regard to it is one of the gravest reasons for weakness in the Church.

As so often, we can get at the truth most easily by considering extremes, and in this matter there are two. There is, on the one hand, the view of those who believe that Christian people should put their efforts vigorously behind definite good enterprises, uniting with others of goodwill, or acting corporately as Christians, in the conviction that such action leads in the end, if it is strong and persistent enough, to a better order in the world, even to a perfect order. They believe that the Kingdom of God, a state of being in which the will of God is done and His rule accepted and obeyed, is connected with such effort of the earnest Christian disciple, as effect is connected with cause. It is therefore possible, on this view, to speak, not loosely and accidentally, but quite strictly, of men "bringing in the Kingdom of God" and "building the Kingdom of God." We ought to give ourselves to the obvious Christian tasks in the world in the conviction that, if we do, and enough of us join together in doing so, we have every ground for expecting that commensurate results will follow.

It is now fashionable to laugh at this view, as

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blindly optimistic, only possible to safe and comfortable Anglo-Saxons, wholly unscriptural and at bottom based on a humanitarian idealism. We do not agree with the view described, but we think that it has a moral earnestness and a sense of responsibility occasionally lacking in those who tilt at it. It has been strongly represented in the United States, and it is, of course, true that in that country there have been both a myriad urgent social tasks to perform, and a secure, growing and prosperous society in which to carry them out. But it is necessary to recognize the passion of earnestness and the mobilization of ability that has accompanied this faith.¹ It is all too easy for its critics, imagining that they stand for a theocentric view, and are honouring God in denouncing easy humanitarian optimism, to fall into an acceptance of the world-order which makes blasphemous nonsense of all Christian discipleship.

But it is true that by New Testament insights this view must be regarded as shallow and inadequate. Listen to Albert Schweitzer, himself in

¹ In view of the tendency in Continental and some British quarters to speak depreciatingly of American religion and theology, and in particular to regard it—"Amerikanismus"—as the main source of the humanistic poison, I wish to say, and I hope that my American friends will not regard it as patronizing and impertinent, that in my judgment such an attitude is highly inappropriate. There is in the United States a group of theologians, younger men banded together on a common broad basis, who in ability and collective power would not be easy to match elsewhere. American delegates to the two great conferences at Oxford and Edinburgh exhibited a genuine humility of spirit, and they have made more out of the two gatherings than the delegates of any other land.—W.P.

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practice a whole-hearted exponent of the duty of vigorous Christian service in the world of men.

“Jesus does not speak of the Kingdom of God as of something that comes into existence through a development of human society, but as of something which is brought about by God. In His thought the ethical activity of man is only like a powerful prayer to God, that he may cause the Kingdom to appear without delay. There is a deep significance in the fact that Jesus does not establish the organic connection, which to us seems so natural, between the ethical acts of man and the realization of the Kingdom of God.”

Or to Professor E. F. Scott. “The very programme of Christianity, as it is often understood, is to establish the Kingdom of God on earth by the concentrated effort of all good men. To Jesus this conception would have been meaningless, and even repellent. The Kingdom, as He knew it, was God’s, and men could no more establish it than they could make the sun rise in heaven. His attitude was always that of trust in a divine power and wisdom, which will accomplish for us what we cannot do for ourselves. This did not mean that men were to stand by passively until God fulfilled His promises, but that they could count on God.”¹

What is the other extreme view held among Christians? It is, in brief, that the world order lies so wholly in the evil one that it is not merely over-hopeful and optimistic, it is positively un-Biblical,

¹ Quoted from *Christianity and the Religions of the World* and *Ethical Teaching of Jesus* respectively, in Oldham’s *Devotional Diary*.

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to expect that Christian effort in the world will have any effect upon it. God will bring in His Kingdom when He will; that Kingdom not only belongs to a sphere of being that is beyond history, but no moral action and effort in this world has anything whatever to do with it. When Christ comes there will be ushered in an era qualitatively different from that in which we live. Till then the duty of the Christian is to watch, to pray, to witness to the divine and supernatural hope, but never to imagine that action in this world is integrally connected with that blessed hope.

Here, again, it is necessary to take the position seriously. The truth of the contention has been admitted that between human effort and the coming of the Kingdom it is not right to establish a causal connection. What is really remarkable is the fact that in some of those who profess this view, even in an extreme form, it is possible to find the most determined and selfless labour in practical service. They would say that they were witnessing to their faith, and they would deny that they were trying or hoping to "make the world better," but they would put to shame many who do.

The answer to this view is not merely that it affords a religious justification for every cowardly evasion of practical duty, and for every interested attempt to preserve privilege unimpaired. It is that the view takes one side of the truth and leaves the other. We do not honour God by being so jealous of His priority that we forget to do His will. Our Lord's prayer, by which He told us to

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govern our prayers and therefore, presumably, our actions, is that "Thy Will may be done, on earth as in heaven." If that thought—so inexhaustible in its richness—does not mean that we are to get busy with the perfection of society as a human project, to be accomplished by our prayerful energy, neither does nor can it mean that the actual choices which men make on this earth, and the actions they perform within this world order, do not matter infinitely. It cannot mean that the abuses and evils that reign among men are not to be attacked in the name of a holy God. It cannot mean, in the words of the parody of a well-known hymn:

Sit down, O men of God,
His Kingdom He will bring
Whenever it may please His will;
You cannot do a thing.

The true way for Christians, surely, is suggested to us by what is right rather than by what is wrong in these two contrasted and extreme views. The Church is the Body of Christ, the vehicle of the Spirit, the society in which is known the forgiveness of sins and the rebirth into power. It looks always for the full manifestation of that Kingdom of God of which it has itself the earnest and the token. Living itself in the world of time, it yet has its hold upon eternity, and it counts its members not only on earth but beyond the veil. It knows, therefore, and the knowledge must govern all its thought and action, that the Kingdom of God, which God shall usher in, must transcend even the best order of life

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that human minds can conceive and human hands make real by their labour.

But this Kingdom governs every action and every choice that the Christian makes. He cannot escape from the tension between the absolute law of love, binding upon him if he confesses Christ, and the necessities of a sinful world which prevent him, as a man bound up in society, from fulfilling perfectly that law. But he must be continually trying to carry it out. He must judge the practical opportunities and choices that offer themselves to him by the law of the Kingdom. He must look at every scheme for the betterment of the lot of his fellow-men and the establishment of a nobler order in the world in the light of the Kingdom, and he must throw himself in with that way or plan that in his judgment, as fair and unselfish as he can make it, is nearest to the principle of that Kingdom. *But he must act.* There may even be times when, in Professor Hocking's words, "the connection between the success of his cause in the world and the success of his own deed lies clear before him; when he knows beyond doubt that the arc of destiny of an idea must now coincide with the swing of his own arm."¹ The Kingdom of God will still be for him something that God ushers in, not merely a development of our present world order, but it will also be something present in life, a criterion of action, an inner reminder not only of a future transformation, but of the present validity of eternal standards. So it is that the Church must

¹ *Meaning of God in Human Experience*, p. 511.

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always cry, when the best has been done that can be done, "Lord, we are unprofitable servants." If anyone thinks that this is a temper of mind that makes vigorous action impossible, one can only say, dogmatically because out of positive experience; that he is mistaken. This is the true way. It is neither to stand apart from the aspirations and labours of a needy world, nor to risk the certainty of disillusionment when the eternities are made to depend upon some human device succeeding.

Is it fanciful to illustrate this point by comparison with what we all experience in profound æsthetic enjoyment? We are caught up in a moment of perfect music, or we come suddenly among the mountains upon a breath-taking view. How soon the moment passes; even as it is with us there is that lurking knowledge, common to all of us mortal men and women, that as we enjoy it, it is gone. To enjoy is in the selfsame moment to have ceased to enjoy, and there is sadness in it. But the truly religious soul will in the moment of ecstasy be offering it, perhaps unconsciously, to God. To do so is not to escape from the temporal condition of our experience; the joy of music or of sight has come and passed. But we have not so given ourselves to it that as it passes we are bereft; by offering it to God we lose its transiency in the eternal love. It becomes not merely a joy that is brought to us out of the mysterious bosom of nature, but a gift of our Father which we offer again to Him. It is taken up into the continual intercourse of love.

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In such a way we can look upon Christian effort, whether of the individual or of the Church. If we allow ourselves to be so wrapped up in what we do that we forget its earthly quality, are over-certain of what the end ought to be, and treat a relative and partial good as absolute, then we must needs experience that sense of disillusionment. But if in all that we try to do we are offering it to God, conscious that it is imperfect judged by the eternal standards, but doing the best we can and leaving the result and the end to God, there is no loss of earnestness and determination, but there is a freedom from anxious worry and the impious insistence that we know the future. The disposition of Atlas, who held the world on his shoulders, is not proper to the Christian.

PUTTING THE CHRISTIAN HOUSE IN ORDER

But the Church's own house needs to be put in order. Obviously, the power with which the Church can press home its witness to the eternal verities within the world of time depends in some measure on the fellowship of the Church itself. We cannot do more here than point to the urgency of the question of the unity of Christians, and deplore the apathy with which the masses of Christians still seem to regard it.

Why is it urgent? Not because it would be more economical. It might be—who can say? But it is abundantly certain that no one who has lived in

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and loved a small denomination, and enjoyed the intimacy of its life, will give it up for the sake of economy. Nor even for the sake of efficiency, though efficiency in the work of the Lord is a great thing. It is really a matter of obedience to our Lord. We do not think here of texts, such as the much-quoted "that they may all be one." Obviously that is susceptible of more than one interpretation, and there are people who are prepared to argue seriously that only a "spiritual" union was ever meant. It is a matter of obedience, because our supreme duty is to witness to Christ, and it is surely impossible to believe that our present denominational regimentations are anything but a travesty of a witnessing fellowship. If we can conceive of our Master yearning in love over the world of men, and then think of our organized Churches, and can be satisfied that this is what He desires as His Body, the expression among men of that fellowship in suffering and victorious love—if we can accomplish that feat, we have some right not to believe in the movement for the outward unity of Christians. It will not be easy.

That there are genuine difficulties no sensible and informed person will deny. They will not be removed easily, for they have roots deep in history.¹ It is, however, plain to those who have become versed in the matter that the principal need, if they are to be solved, is for an earnest, passionate, deter-

¹ See the *Report of the Edinburgh Conference on Faith and Order*, *passim*.

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mined will to solve them. The only reason why, on the whole, the "younger Churches" of Asia are more obviously interested in the overcoming of denominational divisions than are the older, is that they are more conscious of a common and overwhelming task. For them, or at least for the greater part of their members who have become aware of the problem, the divisions really are intolerable. They are also both irrelevant and somewhat grotesque.

But even though the achievement of organic unity for the Christian Church may not be possible in the near future, there is possible a very large degree of co-operation, and it is to this that we of the present day are most obviously called. Both in the realm of thought and in that of action there are opportunities for closer co-operation which ought not to be missed, for it is our plain duty to seize them. In the realm of thought an admirable example has been afforded by the international mobilizing of Christian scholars for the work of the Oxford conference on Church, Community and State. Whether in regard to the profound matters of principle, on which Christendom has been divided to an extent which has prevented combined action, or in regard to practical issues, it is now possible to secure a critical exchange of Christian thinking which, to those who have had any experience of it, is plainly of the very highest value.

Co-operation in thought is perhaps the easiest kind of co-operation to secure. Co-operation in

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action is much harder. You can have second thoughts, but actions cannot be recalled. It is natural that there should be nervousness at this point, as the discussions on the proposed World Council of Churches, mooted at the Oxford and Edinburgh Conferences, plainly showed. Yet if the main principle is laid down and firmly adhered to, namely, that no separate Church is committed to action or policy without its consent, it should be possible to bring into existence an instrument which all Churches could use, for the formation of common judgments, the assembling of more adequate information than is normally available to a single communion, and the facing of those tremendous practical tasks which confront all Christian communions alike. Even the creation of a council or standing conference which would keep alive the idea of a common Christian fellowship in the world would be well worth while.

THE TASK OF WORLD EVANGELIZATION

But when we have listened to God speaking to us in the call to repent, and to re-order the manner of our witness to Him, what then? It is here that we would wish to sound in this book a call that is clean contrary to the spirit of our times. It seems that in our Western lands not many people think to-day of the Church moving forward in answer to the call of God. We look around us at home and we read of dwindling congregations and Sunday Schools; we look abroad and we regret

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that in the face of vast opportunities we have to retrench our budgets. We know that in certain countries, both East and West, the existence of the Church, as a body free to witness to its faith in God, is threatened. Whatever we may say, we act as though we believed that it was the manifest will of God that the Church should slow down, bank up the fires, and wait.

There are ways and ways of waiting. To wait, in an intensity of prayer and expectancy, for God to show Himself in unmistakable guidance and power, might be to-day a discipleship such as is most of all needed. There is in North Africa on the edge of the Sahara desert a community of Roman Catholic "religious," dedicated for the rest of their lives to pray for the conversion of Islam. In the face of that great unconquered rock, the pride, aloofness and contempt of Islam, they are giving themselves to prayer. But if waiting means that we have lost grip on our faith that this is God's world, it is a very different matter.

For there can surely be no doubt that outside the hope that is in Jesus there is no other hope in the world. It has been the writer's privilege recently to have some contact with men in public life and to gain some impression of their outlook upon affairs. The effect left on the mind is one of almost unrelieved gloom. The war danger, the break-up of international morality, the satiation of the public mind with news of successful brigandage—all these things conspire to make

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men who are normally hopeful and are certainly "on the side of the angels" behave as if the angels were out of business.

To express another view is to risk the appearance of facile optimism, not based on any true understanding of the gravity of the world situation. Yet we have followed an argument and survey in this book which leads to no such flaccid conclusion. The need of the world is precisely for that which the Church exists to preach. But what do we mean when we say that the Church is to preach it? Not merely that it is to urge people to follow an ideal. *To preach means to bear witness to reality.* In this world of bewilderment, where it seems that only aeroplanes matter for the preservation of the worthier elements in human life, the Church has the duty and the power to announce the loving act of God and the regenerating power that flows from it. Not only that, but this same world, if only we look at it widely enough, exhibits abundant proof of the power of this preaching in men's hearts and lives. We have tried to show some of the evidence for this.

It is impossible to believe that when the Church is faced by a world that in its maddened impotence calls aloud for what Christ can give, though it does not know Him, we should flinch from the task of the evangel. Still more is it impossible when we know that all over the world the missionary labours of the Church offer so impressive a spectacle of opportunity.

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“Let the Church be the Church,” said the Oxford conference. Let the Church, having “surveyed its task,” now with faith and humility essay that task. Let it take the steps that are within its power to mobilize its own resources, to pool its wisdom, to plan its work.

Let the task of evangelizing the world be pursued with faith and hope. It is now a task not, as once it was, almost entirely for the emissaries of the Church life of the Western countries, but a task in which living Churches all over the world eagerly share, as in a duty and privilege that is their own. It is a scandalous thing that this primary labour of the Church should in every denomination of the whole Church be supported by only a minority of the faithful. “He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.” Nay, if He is not for the whole world, what can He be to us? A tribal God cannot forgive sins.

Let us then stand behind these Christians in Japan, Korea, and China, in their immense difficulties and their great opportunities. They need all the help that the whole Church throughout the world can give them. Let us help the Christians of India, who in a day of rebirth of the national spirit know that they have a treasure in store of which the holy Ganges can never whisper to the pilgrims. Let us find a new humility in which to overcome that old enmity that still separates the Muslim from the Word. Let us see to it that when every influence of trade, govern-

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ment and education is shaking the tribal societies of Africa to pieces, they do not go without the recreating spirit of Christ.

It is not necessary here to do more than refer to the fact that in all this effort, plainly demanded of the universal Church, there must be the flexibility of method that changed days require. If we are about the business of building up the universal Church, we must not behave in fact as if we were prolonging the different denominational organizations to which we have ourselves grown accustomed.

There is need of the same kind here in our Western lands. In new housing areas there have grown up integrations of humanity where the distinctively Christian type of civilization is barely known. Not only in a geographical sense, there are new regions to be attempted. We have written already of the great need for the members of the Churches, especially the lay members, to find their way together in patient discovery of what the Christian life means in the conditions set by our modern economic and social order.

Even in face of the bankruptcy of secular statesmanship, and the fact that none but a few in the inner circles of governments know the facts upon which policies are based, a task can be accomplished by the Church. As we have shown, there is a largely untapped reservoir of life that can be released if only the Church can realize its own universal quality. The establishment of contact and friendship among Christians in different

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countries does not get easier as the months pass; the idea of a universal Church is to some of those who rule the nations highly distasteful. But that is no reason why the task should not be taken up. What might not God do in and through a world Church that was united in intercession, its intercession arising from hearts aware of the world need and identified with it? We do not know what God might do, but it is not either futile or irreverent to set the question in the foreground of our thought.

THE CALL OF THE CHURCH

It must be faced that the great masses of Christians in the large organized communions can only be brought within the circle of such ideas if little groups of convinced people, themselves holding together in the work of prayer, experimentation and service, gradually change the mass. But there is much to show that such an effort would meet with a far greater response than our jaded spirits will easily believe to be possible.

Above all, let the younger people find a new belief in the Church of Christ. They are not to be blamed if they have not felt always that they were wanted; all denominations (barring the Friends) are highly clericalized, and the war years prolonged the leadership of the old, as they well know. It is not only the writer's own Presbyterianism which might be described as "the negation of youth

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erected into a system." But where else can they go for a crusade which can remotely compare with this? What charter is there, possessed by some other society, that surpasses this, of the Cross and Resurrection of Christ and the hope of the Kingdom of God? Where is the fellowship so widely flung among all the nations? Where the roll of saints and heroes?

Moreover, let it be frankly faced that a revived Church, should God give us that in our day, would not have an easy time. We have recurred again and again to the fact that the Church and the faith which it professes can never become comfortably accommodated to the world, except by losing all savour. The essence of the Church's message is not rearrangement but regeneration. It can only say that the cherished idols of which men make gods, having forgotten God, must be recognized as what they are; human community, as we have seen, is not to be found in the exaltation of man or any part of man, but only in God and His love. Precisely because this is so vitally important, it cuts across what men most cherish. But there are no other terms on which the power of Christ can be known.

Once more we remind ourselves that this challenge is not just a call to put forth more human energy. Nothing is plainer in Western Christianity to-day than that the comparatively small body of men and women who bear large burdens of responsibility are spiritually tired. The writer of these lines knows too well for himself the futility

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of a merely athletic Christianity to wish to add one more call to the many that invite us to the fray. The Church in the world to-day is weak, in spite of its vast numbers and its majestic history. The modern type of secular power thinks that it has got the measure of the Church, and that it will "go quietly." To hope for a Christian advance that would, as it were, beat the secular dervishes at their own game, or that would be so powerful, as the world counts power, that it could not be disregarded, is a dangerous illusion.

In hoc signo vinces. We believe that the world is in the hands of a loving and almighty God. He has called into being His Church, and the mighty act of love that He wrought in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ His Son is the foundation on which that Church stands. In the dying of Jesus on the Cross, there has been made known to mankind the recreating power of the forgiveness of sins. In the incredible certainty that came to Mary in the garden, that after all He was alive, we know that there is a power of everlasting life. A Spirit has been shed abroad among men, and not only in Jerusalem at Pentecost, but in human communities in our own world we have seen the strongholds cast down and men and women remade. Something of all this we know for ourselves, and we could know more.

We return, then, to God. We ask Him to forgive us for our proud reliance on ourselves. We beseech Him that we may enter anew into the knowledge of what He has done. We bring to

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Him our best thought, our most efficient organization, our most devoted service, and we beseech Him to use these things. They are our acted prayer, and in that prayer of action, as in our prayer in the quiet place when the doors are shut, we say "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done."

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